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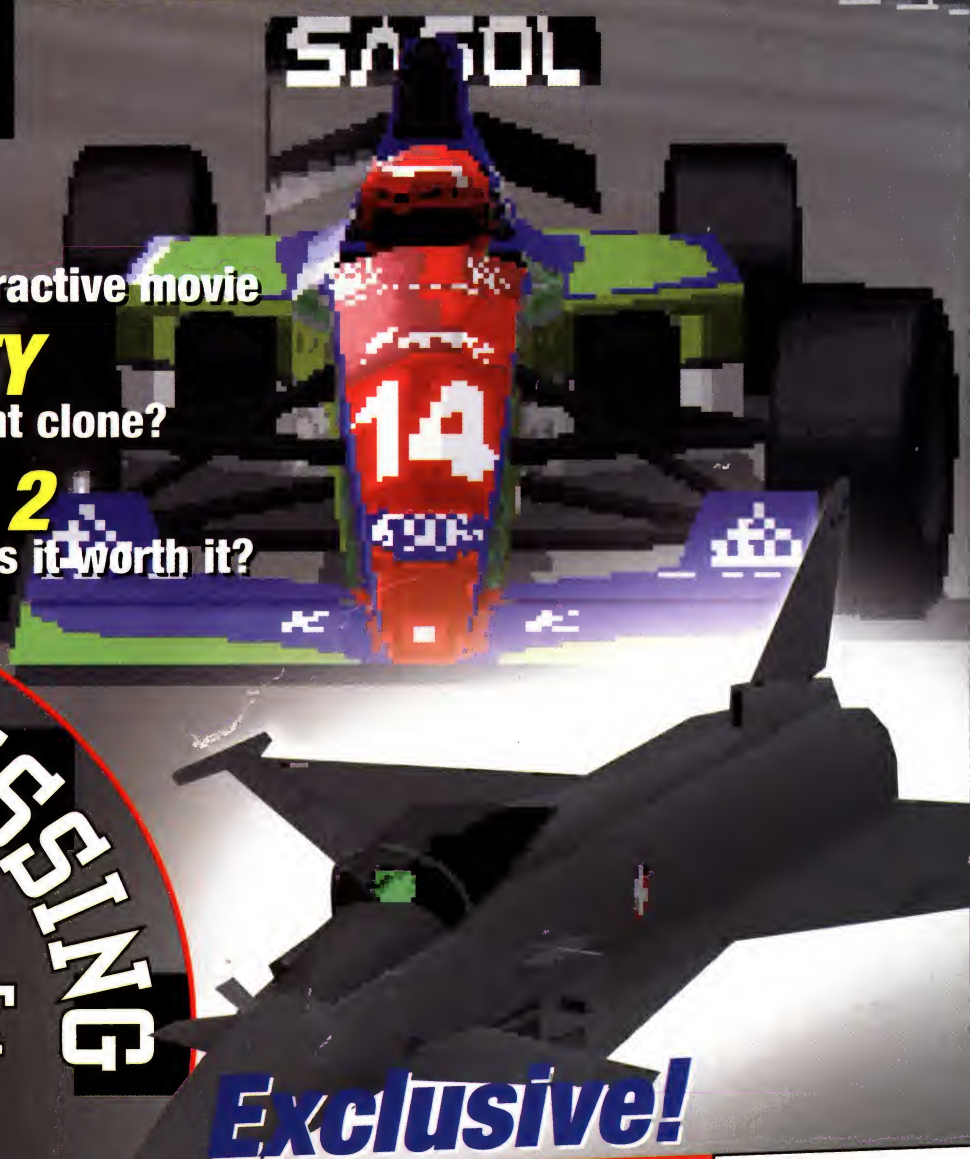
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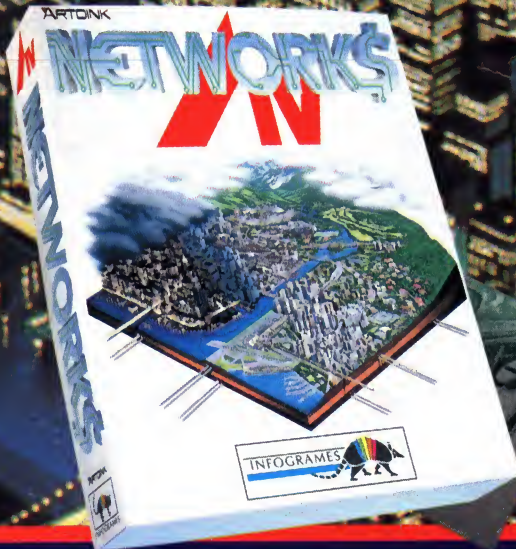


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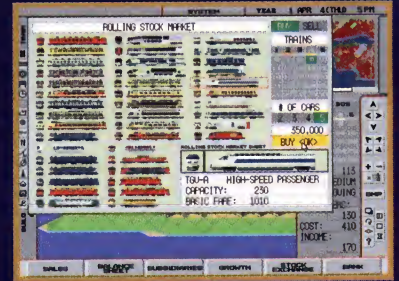
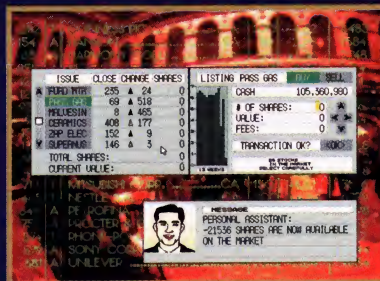
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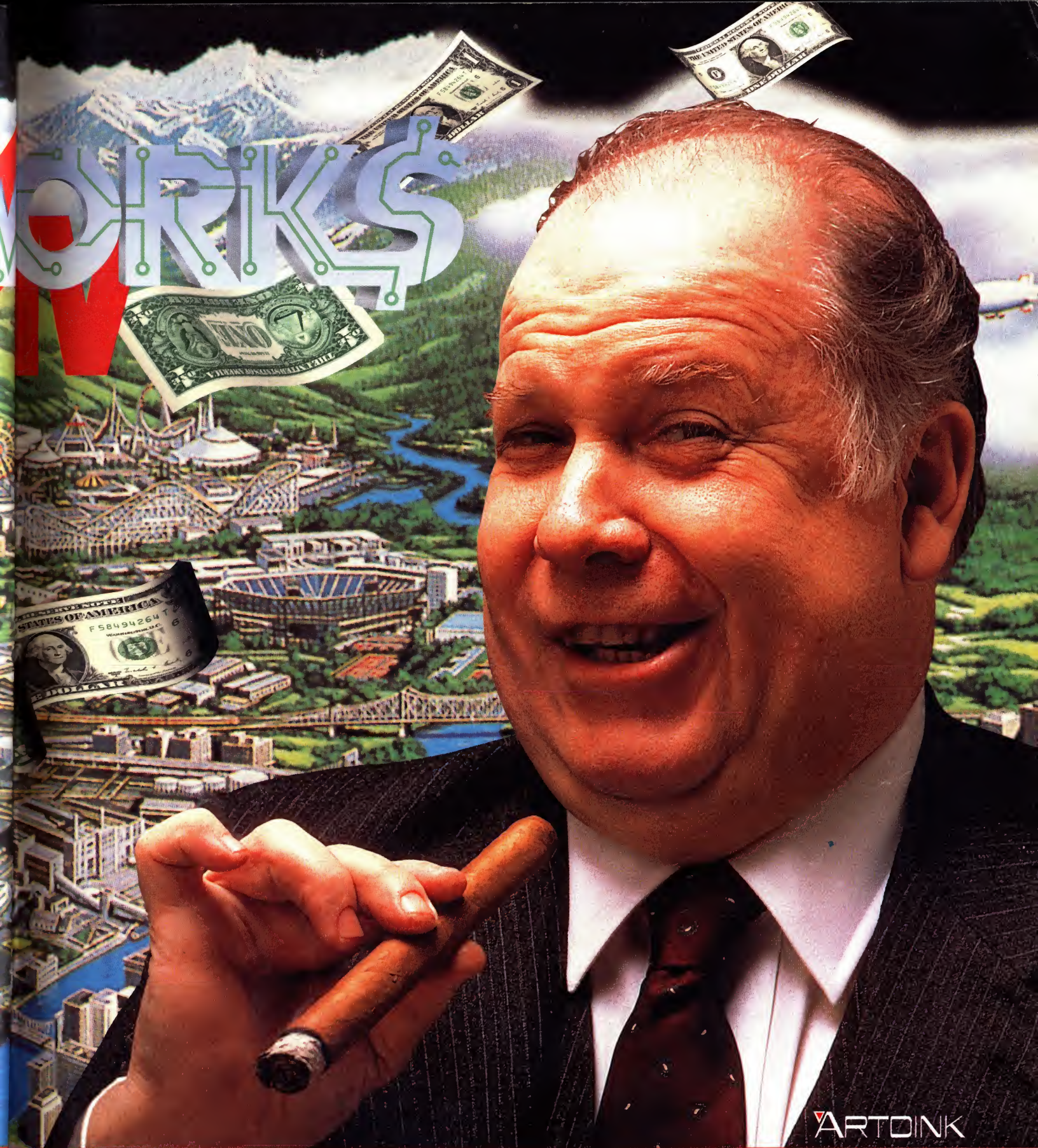
THE BUCKS START HERE.



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C:\>Directory



19 Bolsover St,
London W1P 7HJ
Tel: 0171 631 1433
Fax: 0171 436 1321
CompuServe: 100142, 2152
CIX: PC ZONE @ CIX.compulink.co.uk

Editor John Davison; Art Editor Jason Simmons;
Deputy Editor Jeremy Wells; Production Editor
Deborah Opoczynska; Features Editor Chris Anderson;
Disk Editor Daniel Emery; Reader Services Miles
Tudor; Contributors Amaya Lopez (Production); Jez
McBean (Production); David McCormack (Design)
Daniel Palmer (Design); Simon Bradley; Charlie
Brooker; Marcus Pullen; Toby Finlay; David
McCandless; Duncan MacDonald; David Mathieson;
Patrick McCarthy; Andy Mitchell; Paul Presley;
Publisher Tim Ponting; Subscriptions Hotline 01454
620070; Assistant Advertising Manager Mike
Shepherd 0171 631 1433; Advertising Sales
Executive Andrew Caddy; Group Advertising
Manager Alan Gonsalves; Advertising Production
Khabl Mirza; Group Production Manager Simon
Maggs; Origination Colour-Tech 0171 729 3934;
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Manager James Burnay; Distribution SM Magazine
Distribution 0181 677 8111; Mail Order Manager Julia
French; Publishing Director Bruce Sawford;
Circulation Director Sean Farmer; Creative Director
Jimmy Egerton; Non-Executive Director Dick
Pountain; Financial Director Ian Leggett; Managing
Director Alistair Ramsay; Chairman Felix Dennis

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Formula One Grand Prix 2

It's been a long time coming, but the sequel to MicroProse's *F1GP* is very nearly with us. And yes... the picture on the cover is a screen shot. It's not artwork, it's not pre-rendered, it's just a shot taken from the in-game action. Impressive, eh? See page 52.

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The 3D racing game gets spriced up and ported to the PC. Try your hand at a Dodge Viper and various other meaty butch-mobiles.

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This one is going to be hot. Check out our exclusive preview of what will certainly knock *Falcon* off the top of the flight sim heap.

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Flashback 2... but not *Flashback 2*. More than a platform game this time. Now we get a full 3D environment and loads of really flash SVGA bits.

Fatal Racing 34

Another *Ridge Racer* clone, but this time with stunt bits thrown in as well. Gremlin Interactive proves that it knows what its doing with 3D games.

Su27 37

Bradders is still creaming over this one. We've had to lock him in a cupboard

just to get him to shut up about it. Arguably the most accurate combat sim conceived. Hmm - which will win? This or *EF2000*?

Actua Soccer 40

3D spinny-aroundy soccer action. It looks stunning and looks like definitely being one in the eye for recent Saturn owners. So check out the demo on this month's CD.

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MicroProse moves its attention away from the big racing cars for a while and produces something that looks remarkably familiar.

Krazy Ivan 44

Big robots, supermodels and the Anglia TV studios in Norwich. What have they all got in common? The new blast 'em up from Psygyg.

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With a budget greater than any other game ever and more actors than that bit at the end of *Ghandi*, Electronic Arts goes overboard in this stunning, new interactive movie.



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Apogee unleashes the first of its 3D Realms games, so *PC Zone* unleashes Duncan to see if it really is as good as the hype.

Across the Rhine 62

And about bloody time, too. MicroProse finally gets its rather spectacular tank-based war sim finished. But has it been worth the wait?

Space Quest 6 66

Did we really want to see Roger flamin' Wilco for a sixth time? This time he talks, runs in svga and comes at you through Windows.



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Action Soccer 68

It had potential, but ultimately this seems to have been relegated to the ranks of "another crap footie game".

Simon the Sorcerer 2 70

Simon returns and now he struts around in DMs and has grown his hair long. Even though Chris Barrie hasn't done the voice this time, this is still a bloody good talkie adventure.

Last Dynasty 72

From the people that brought us *Inca* (snigger, snigger) we get a Windows-based, *Wing Commander*-ish blast fest, with a few adventure bits hidden away.

Dungeon Master 2 74

It took 'em four years to get this out. Four bloody years! We locked Macca in a darkened room to see if it would drive him completely bonkers (with *Doom* breaks, of course).

Lords of Midnight 78

Another very old game is given the sequel treatment. Was it really worth dragging up such an old Spectrum title and giving it the 3D treatment?

AIV Networks 80

A business sim for people who love trains. My god... a trainspotter sim. Argh! Quick, hide.

US Marine Fighters 82

The much-awaited add-on disk for *US Navy Fighters*. Our resident propeller head sinks his teeth into Sea Harriers and the like.

Sim Town 84

SimCity for kids... and a game where you can make people say rude things when they're pissed off. Got to be good really, hasn't it?

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Rowan teams up with Mindscape and chucks in all the best bits from its other flight sims, spicing it up with a sort of fantasy strategy thing. Rather groovy.

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Win some of those huge models that you see in places like *Beatties* for unfeasibly large amounts of money. We've got loads to give away... well over £600 worth in fact.

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C:\>Cover Disk



This month **PC Zone** brings you the ultimate cover disk! Owners of a registered copy of **Doom** (so that's probably just about all of you) can now upgrade to **Ultimate Doom... for FREE!**

DOOM UPDATE

Ultimate Doom (iD)

Upgrade your registered copy of **Doom** to **Ultimate Doom** from iD by simply popping the **PC Zone** cover disk into your drive, making your floppy drive current by typing, for example, A: and then simply typing <PCZONE> to run the update.

All you need to do now is follow the prompts on screen and when you've finished you'll have a fully working copy of **Ultimate Doom**. Hoorah!

This update has been made possible thanks to iD in the US and is not an update supplied by GT Interactive.

Please note that this is an update for version 1.9 of the registered copy of **Doom**. If you do not own a registered copy of **Doom**, we suggest that you buy a full copy from your retailer. The full copy of **Ultimate Doom** from iD and GT Interactive is available now for around £30 and received 90 per cent and a **PC Zone Classic** award when we reviewed it last month.

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

Specifications: 386 SX, 4Mb RAM

No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

Miles Tudor, CD Exchange (30), PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover St, London. W1P 7HJ

Your Details (Please print clearly)

Name:

Address:

Post Code:

Please make cheques payable to:

DENNIS PUBLISHING Ltd.

CDs from previous issues are also available.

Phone Miles (never before 11.00am) on: 0171 917 7693



To install this month's CD, make the drive containing the disk current by typing, for example, D: Then type **ZONE**. A menu will then pop up with a list of this month's software – simply use the cursor keys to highlight the program you wish to run, hit <RETURN> and off you go.

DOOM UPDATE

Ultimate Doom (iD)

Upgrade your registered copy of **Doom** to **Ultimate Doom** from iD by simply selecting the item from the cover disc menu and then follow the prompts on screen.

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

Specifications: 386 SX, 4Mb RAM

PLAYABLE DEMOS

The Duracell £50,000 Challenge (Again!)

Last month some of you may have had difficulty running the Duracell challenge. So here's the new and improved bunny challenge. Enjoy.

Specifications: 386 SX, 4Mb RAM

Virtual Golf (Core Design)

The latest release from Derby-based Core design brings us **Virtual Golf – The Scottish Open**. In this fully playable demo, you can try your hand at a few practice putts and get lost in the rough. The playable sections are found in "The Bowery" or "Penpero". Select Practice, chose an amateur, then choose your hole and off you go.

For instructions and controls, press the space bar once you are on the course.

Controls: Mouse

Specifications: 486 33, 4Mb RAM (8Mb RAM Recommended)

FX Fighters (Philips Media)

Probably the best beat 'em up you can buy on the PC. It got six grouchy magazine staff members through an awful





deadline... so it can probably do anything. In this demo you can either play the computer or a second player, and can choose one of two characters. To control your player, choose the control option (either joystick or keyboard) and configure the keys if necessary.

Controls: Keyboard, joystick or gamepad
Specifications: 486 SX (DX2/66 or higher recommended), 8Mb RAM

Prisoner of Ice (Infogrames)

"Pert Neo-Nazi-bashing Lovecraft Ice Buttocks" was sort of how this game was described last month (what are you on? - Ed.) This is the latest graphical adventure game from Infogrames. Point and click your way around, avoiding Nazi-death. Just don't forget 1918, 1945, 1966 etc. A bloody good game, and well worth the PC Zone Recommended accolade it received.

Controls: Mouse
Specifications: 386 (486 or higher recommended), 4Mb RAM

Buried in Time (US Gold)

Woooo! A Windoze™ program. For anybody that has ever fancied a quick trip back in time. Have a quick siege in Medieval England; race screaming from the Romans, excite yourself with the Big Bang etc.

To play the demo, select the Interactive Demo from the main menu.
Specifications: 386 DX (486 DX or higher recommended), 8Mb RAM, requires Windows 3.1 and SVGA

Vortex (Warner Interactive)

This trippy Sci-Fi action thriller thingy from Warner Interactive is touted as the next generation of Interactive Films. Fortunately (just so you can see how true this is), the demo is fully interactive and will allow you to sample the various degrees of weirdness. Described by Lord Lakin as "hippy shit" in last month's review, it's definitely an acquired taste, but hey... it got 80 per cent.

Controls: Mouse
Specifications: 386 (486 or higher recommended), 4Mb RAM, SVGA

Apache Longbow (DI)

It's been a long time coming, but Digital Integration is almost ready to unleash its awesome combat helicopter sim. As long as all goes according to plan we'll be bringing you a review next month, but in the mean time check out this playable demo of the game.

Control the Apache with the cursor keys: use <RETURN> to select a weapon; press <SPACE> to fire it; press <C> to toggle your night sight; and hit <T> to lock on to a target.

Controls: Keyboard or joystick
Specifications: 486 SX (DX2/66 or higher recommended), 4Mb RAM

ROLLING DEMOS

CD-ROM Magazine (Dennis)

This is a presentation from the UK's premier multimedia magazine, CD-ROM



Help!

The CD not working? HD playing up? The PC's just being a total bast? Then just relax, chill out, have a nice cold shower and then phone the relevant help line:

HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on 01274 736990
 Any week day between 9am and 4pm.

CD-ROM HELP

Phone Miles Tudor on 0171 917 7693
 Any week day between 11am and 6pm.
 (DO NOT phone earlier as your calls will NOT be answered.)

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible, have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call...
- ...if this is not possible, note down as much relevant information as possible i.e. system type, sound card, RAM etc., plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant information.



Magazine (PC Zone's sister magazine, incidentally), and shows what you can expect from the disc.

Specifications: 386 SX, 4Mb RAM, SVGA

Actua Soccer (Gremlin)

Gremlin is about to unleash an



absolutely stunning 3D football game. Check out our Blueprint this month on page 40. To see the game in action simply select the demo from the menu and sit back and watch. I'm sure you'll admit it does look rather jolly super.

Specifications: 486 DX, 8Mb RAM

Nyack (Echo)

Nyack is a new band who has recently been signed to the Echo record label. Why is it on the PC Zone cover disc? Well... Nyack is one of the first bands to adopt the new CD Plus format on a commercial album release. This demo brings you some music from the CD (sort of jangly Oasis-style pop/rock), as well as examples of the band's "multimedia scrapbook", which you get when you buy the album.

Specifications: 386, 4Mb RAM



(Above) FX Fighters is without a doubt the best beat 'em up on the PC. Check out the demo and decide for yourself.

(Above left) Apache Longbow has been a long time coming, but fortunately you can check out this fully playable demo before we review the game next month.



(Left & right) *Fatal Racing* is the new *Ridge Racer*-style racing game from Gremlin Interactive. Watch the demo and check out our Blueprint on page 34.



« Fatal Racing (Gremlin)

Another killer game from Gremlin Interactive, this time in the shape of a rather splendid looking *Ridge Racer*-style game. With more texture-mapped polygons than something with an awful lot of texture-mapped polygons, it has all the features you would expect from a touring car-style racing game... with an added bonus - stunts!

Specifications: 486 DX, 4Mb RAM

SHAREWARE

Winzip

This is the latest version of the world's most wonderful program. Winzip allows you to decompress all .zip .arj and other archived files at the measly press of a mouse button, and it installs very easily into Windows, too.

What more could you ask for, eh? Just select Winzip from the menu on the cd and away you go.

COMMS STUFF

Ameol

Ameol will allow you to hook up to CIX (Compulink Information eXchange) and get into the PC Zone conference.

Existing users of CIX, to whom this is all new, should look in the forum list, press f3 (find) and type: pczone. Then hit the join button.

Mozaic

This is the latest package that will let you fly all over the "net".

PC Zone On-Line

Also featured on this month's cd is all the software covered by the PC Zone On-Line feature.

Please see page 108 for more. **Z**

Help Me! I'm Frowning...

Stuck? PC acting like the proverbial pain in the posterior? Well before you go and ring our tech support line, just take a quick butchers at this handy Trouble-shooting guide.

If you experience a problem, the first thing to do is check out the README.TXT files. This will give you in-depth information on the demo. To do this, type:

Edit readme.txt

If you still have difficulties, these troubleshooting tips may help.

Amnesia?

The most common problem that you'll hit while running any of the demos, is a memory problem. Some programs require EMS, others XMS, and your PC's configuration needs to be altered accordingly. To change the system you will need to edit your CONFIG.SYS in DOS.

To do this, go to the C drive by typing:

C:
CD\
Edit Config.sys

You should look for a line that reads: Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe (if it's not there, then type this in under the first line). You should then add an extra bit that will depend on which set up you require:

For EMS

The line should read:
Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe RAM

For XMS

The line should read:
Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe NOEMS

You are advised to keep the EMS setting as a default. If you have DOS 6.0 or higher you can type: Memmaker at the DOS prompt and say "yes" to EMS if required, or "no" if XMS is needed.

Remember that some games can require up to 590K free base memory.

Boot Disk

If you are still having problems,

then the next step is to make a boot disk. If you're using DOS 6.0 or lower, then just stick to the following steps:

Put a floppy in your A: drive and type: Format A:/S

This will erase all data on the diskette, so use one that is no longer needed. When the disk has finished formatting, change to your A: drive. Type the following lines at the A prompt:

Copy con config.sys <Enter>
DOS=High <Enter>
Device=C:\DOS\Himem.sys <Enter>
Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe RAM <Enter>

(Or Device = C:\DOS\EMM386.exe NOEMS if XMS is required.)

Then add the lines for the sound card and CD-ROM drive in the same manner. (You can get these lines by looking at the original CONFIG.SYS on the C drive.) Once finished, press: F6 <Enter>

You should see the message:
"1 file(s) copied."

If the message does not appear, please follow the instructions again.

IMPORTANT! ONLY USE THESE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE A DRIVE

Next, type the following lines at the A: prompt:

Copy Con Autoexec.bat <Enter>
Prompt \$p\$g <Enter>

All sound card and CD-ROM drive lines

You can find these command lines in the AUTOEXEC.BAT on the C drive.

They may look similar to this:

Set Blaster=A220 I5 D1 H5 P330 T6
Set Sound=C:\SB16

Check your own AUTOEXEC.BAT beforehand. Once you have completed this, press f6, and again you should see message:

"1 file(s) copied."

If the message does not appear, please follow the instructions again.

IMPORTANT! ONLY USE THESE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE A DRIVE

Once you have done this, with the disk in drive A, press: <Ctrl> <Alt> <Delete> keys together to reboot.

Clean Boot

If you have DOS 6.2 or higher, you should reboot your computer. When you get the message: "Starting MS-DOS", hit the f8 key at the top of

the keyboard. You will see the message: "DOS will prompt you to confirm each CONFIG.SYS command". Say yes to the following lines:

DOS=High
Device=C:\DOS\Himem.sys
Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe RAM (Or NOEMS)

The relevant sound and CD drivers. Say no to the rest of your lines until you are asked to process your AUTOEXEC.BAT. Say yes to this line and the following:

Prompt \$p\$g
Path C:\Windows; C:\DOS
Also say yes to all sound card and CD-ROM drivers. Say no to everything else. This should sort things out.

Still Stuck?

No joy with your HD or CD? Then reach for the phone and dial up some help.

HD Disk Help

Phone Matthew on 01274 736990 (Weekdays between 9am and 4pm)

CD-ROM Help

Phone Miles on 0171 917 7693 (Weekdays between 11am and 6pm)

Before you call: Have your PC operating (preferably near the phone) and make sure you have a pen and paper handy to note down any info. Please have details of your machine spec and configuration ready before you call.

Important

Some of the programs on the CD are shareware and, as such, are supplied as an evaluation service to our readers. If you like the programs and intend to continue using them, you should register them with the publishers concerned. In return you will receive updated versions, extra levels, junk mail and loads of other stuff (probably).

All these CDs and HDs have been virus checked. HOWEVER, neither PC Zone, Dennis Publishing nor any associated companies can be deemed liable for any problems that may arise from using this disk.

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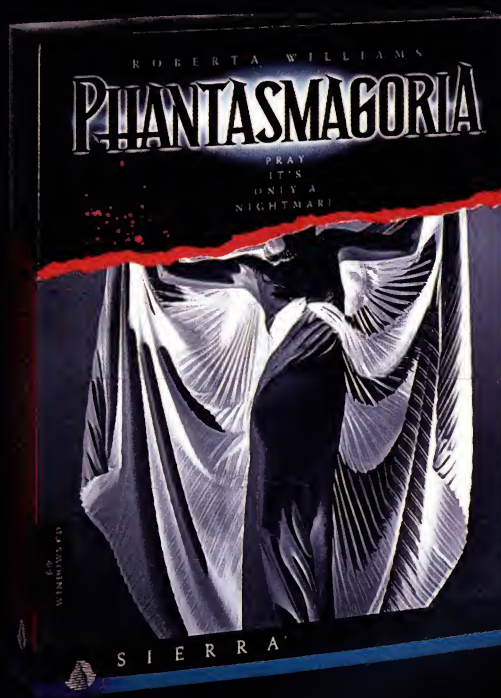
MICRO PROSE

FOR IBM PC CD-ROM

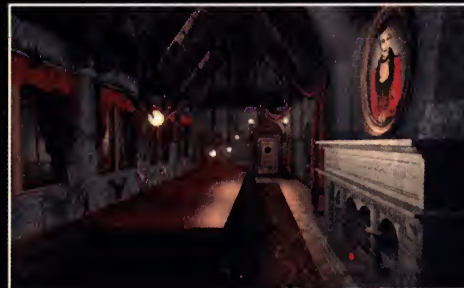
*I feel its presence, icy fingers upon my throat.
I hear its eerie sounds, unsettling my every thought.
I try in vain to slumber, my reveries gripped by violent spasms of terror.
My only salvation, the shock of awakening.
Something is very, very wrong here.*

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Descent 2

WE KNEW IT WAS COMING, AND we knew it would have lots of clever new bits and fancy stuff in it... and now we have some of the first screen shots of *Descent 2*. Picking up where the first game left off, the new product has been the subject of wild speculation, and in the light of more recent products, such as Apogee's *Terminal Velocity*, it's going to have to be hot, as it's up against some awesome competition.

Features that are confirmed for the new game are "outside bits" (as widely rumoured) as well as an enhanced svga graphics driver; larger, more complex, levels, wobbly water (which looks distinctly *Magic Carpet*-ish); and lots of rather super-looking cut-scenes.

As we go to press, an official release

date is yet to be confirmed, but it seems likely that the game could be Interplay's Big Game for this Christmas.

As with the original game, it is expected that a shareware version of the product will be released first, with a full version in time for the Chrimble rush.

Quite whether existing level designers, add-on levels and multi-player networks are supported is unclear at the moment. So watch out for a preview in the next couple of months.

(Above) The cut scenes are certainly a new addition.

(Left) At first glance the in-game graphics look very similar to the original, but there are a number of significant improvements.

Dispatches

+++ Dino on Goal Again

Grapevine whispers have been muttering something about MicroProse signing Dino to do another footie game for the PC. No official details have been released yet, although it is thought that it will be an arcade-style sim which gives you the option to manage your team, or just play one-off matches.

Ultimate Football is due for release in September this year.

+++ No VP on HD

It looks like everyone's favourite ball game, *Virtual Pool* from Interplay, will not be released on floppy disc. A spokesperson for Interplay maintained that though a floppy version of the game was originally planned for release, there are no immediate plans to release the product over the next couple of months, and possibly not at all. There are, however, plans for a *Virtual Snooker*, which is planned for a pre-Christmas release. Hoorah! Time to buy that CD-ROM drive.

+++ Quake For Christmas

Rumours on the *Quake*-vine indicate that iD's very own *Doom*-beater will be with us by Christmas, and will be released as shareware in a limited form.

A spokesperson for iD maintains that *Quake* is now up and running, the engine is looking very good and that the level design is well under way. Although there are still no monsters to speak of, and the only definite weapon is still the Thor-like hammer, iD is confident that its splendidly complicated and mega-realistic gravity algorithms are absolutely top-per. The bad news for us Brits is that it looks like you'll need access to a network or modem, a VR headset, a ninja PC and lots of cash to get the most out of it. Time to emigrate then.

Contact the US Embassy on 0171 499 9000 for further details.

+++ Tim Curry Goes Muppet Mad

Activision has snapped up the games' rights to the forthcoming *Muppet Movie*, and is currently on set with the full cast, filming special scenes for the interactive product.

As you may or may not know, this is the first *Muppet* feature to be produced since the death of Jim Henson, and the film will star (aside from Kermit *et al*) Tim "King of Interactive Movies" Curry.



(Right) Very little is confirmed about the new *Discworld* game, but we do know that there have been a number of enhancements this time.

Discworld 2

NOT PARTICULARLY SURPRISING THIS ONE (AND we probably could have produced a news item speculating on the possibility as soon as the first game had been released), but we now know that Teeny Weeny Games is working on the sequel to *Discworld* for Psygnosis. At present the full storyline has been finished, and as before, Terry Pratchett has been very much an integral part of the development process.

Enhancements over the original include a new svga graphics driver; a vastly improved user interface (not that it really needs it); and a number of new features that Psygnosis were a little reluctant to tell us about.

Quite whether or not the new game will feature all of the original voice actors is unclear, but judging from the immense success of the original, it would be unfortunate if we didn't get Eric Idle as Rincewind again... Unless, of course, the new game doesn't centre around Rincewind. Hmm, just think of the other possibilities - Death, Mort, Ysabel, etc., etc.



Jetfighter III

As we've reported before, US Gold is all set to unleash the third game in the *Jetfighter* series before the end of the year, and from what we've seen so far it looks as though it's shaping up very nicely indeed. Looking not unlike *TFX*, but with much better looking scenery, it seems as though this could be yet another sim that could be fighting it out for dominance amongst the propeller head brigade. But how will it fare against the likes of *EF2000* and *Su27*? At least it's got a proper name rather than just a number, eh? Anyway, before we bring you a Blueprint next month, feast your eyes on these latest screen shots.



BUGS FIRST ENCOUNTERED!



We've squashed the problem

FIRST ENCOUNTERS IS THE SEQUEL TO THE AWARD WINNING FRONTIER ELITE II, THE MOST SUCCESSFUL GAME IN RECENT HISTORY

4/5 CD ROM MAGAZINE

"First Encounters is a real improvement over Elite II: Frontier, particularly in the navigation and combat departments—and it's certainly more intuitive."

89% PC ANSWERS "recommended"

"They've reached new standards with incredibly detailed graphics, showing fully texture-mapped mountains and seas on individual planets, but the outstanding feature, once again, is the gameplay."

4/5 CD ROM TODAY "best buy"

"If you like your games with a bit of meat on them, it's well worth the effort."

85% PC ATTACK

"If you've got the patience, this is still a uniquely absorbing game, and if you're willing to suspend disbelief and become truly at one with it, you'll probably enjoy First Encounters more than anything else you'll play this year."

87% PC GAMER "recommended"

"The structure of First Encounters is superb, and the depth of gameplay it offers is virtually unrivalled."

GAMETEK

**Personal
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World**
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CHOICE**

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Best Sound Card
Sound Galaxy WaveRider 32+
April 1995



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Flight Combat

Looking Glass Technologies (responsible for the rather wonderful *Flight Unlimited*) has given in to the "American way", and revealed that it is working on a flight sim that uses a similar "enhanced" engine and features various kinds of weaponry.

Due for release "before Christmas", details of the project are being kept tightly under wraps. Although speculation abounds that the game will feature aircraft from both World Wars, such as the Supermarine Spitfire and Sopwith Camel, and support multi-player, head-to-head play, the developers are remaining tight lipped as to what the final spec will be. They are, however, confident that the project will support the newly released VFX1 VR head set from Forte, and will be fully Thrustmaster and CH Flightstick compatible.

"Combat Flight Unlimited" as it is already being called, will be published by Virgin Interactive Entertainment.



(Left) Are everyone's wishes about to come true? *Flight Unlimited* with guns... at last!

Dispatches

+++ Nice 'n' Easy Sounds

Orchid has just announced that it is about to release its NuSound PnP sound card, the first product to combine wavetable synthesis, 3D surround sound, 100 per cent games compatibility and support for the Intel/Microsoft Plug & Play specification.

With a suggested retail price of £129, the card boasts a 100 per cent SoundBlaster compatibility, with general MIDI, and makes use of rather special spatial audio technology with rear speaker support for a true surround sound experience. Apparently, it's also an absolute doddle to fit.

Contact Orchid on 01256 479898.



+++ Mousey Mousey

Logitech has just released details of the newly designed Pilot Mouse, which, apart from being Plug & Play, offers increased comfort, thanks to a more rounded shape. It also boasts a heavier tracking ball for heightened sensitivity and greater accuracy, and a self-cleaning mechanism. Now isn't that worth getting excited about?

Contact Logitech on 01344 894300.

+++ Batman Forever

In the midst of all the hype, Acclaim is set to unleash the PC version of its *Batman Forever* arcade game on September 7th. Basically a scrolling "jumpy, fighty, kicky" sort of affair, the game looks as though it might end up being a bit, er... film license like. I'm sure you know what we mean. Still, the screen shots make it look quite smart. Apparently, *Batman Forever* features digitised sprites that were filmed on a blue-screen backdrop, and backgrounds that have been rendered from original film-set specs.

A unique feature of the game is that two players can have a bash at the thing simultaneously: one as Batman and one as Robin, as they take on The Riddler and TwoFace. Watch out for a review soon.



Big Brother Bill Is Watching

Anyone with any unregistered software on their hardrive had better watch out if they have just registered their new copy of Windows 95 using the new Registration Wizard feature. The program, which is built in to Windows 95, does away with the new user having to register his/her software with the usual postcard, and does it automatically via a modem instead.

What is worrying many Internet users, however, is that Registration Wizard is also said to include a feature that checks the files on the user's hard drive and lists all the programs it contains - whether they are paid for or not. This information could then be able to tell Microsoft who is using their software without a license; what other software the user is using; and result in users being targeted with piracy lawsuits or direct marketing mail if they are using rival applications. Microsoft denies that privacy would be infringed and that information would be accessed without the user's permission.

(Left and below) *This Means War!* from MicroProse. It runs under *Windows* and looks unnervingly like *Command & Conquer*.



This Means War!

In what seems to be a prolonged period of inactivity in the flight sim area, MicroProse is set to unleash another tank-based combat game before the end of the year.

This time, though, the whole thing is set in the future and it has an incredibly silly name. Oh yes, it's got some strategy bits thrown in for good measure as well.

As with all of these sorts of futuristic games, *This Means War!* (with an exclamation mark, of course) has a suitably silly storyline...

...Apparently, a computer virus has infected the

entire world-wide computer network and mankind has now plunged into a *Mad Max*-style struggle to rebuild society (that'll teach everyone... you can't just rely on computers, you know.)

Basically, the gameplay looks as though it will be a sort of cross between *Across the Rhine* and *Transport Tycoon*, with just a touch of *SimCity* thrown in for good measure. It will feature network and modem play (if run under *Windows 95*), and impressive SVGA graphics throughout.

As long as all goes according to plan we can expect to see it in the shops in September.

Offensive

As real-time strategy games become more popular, it's good to see developers really manipulating a genre and coming up with something which is actually, genuinely, new.

With games such as *Dune II* and, more recently, *Command and Conquer* proving to be so popular (in the press at least... due to complications it seems that we now won't see a release of *C & C* until the end of September), this action/strategy style is bringing wargames to a much wider audience.

Offensive is the first of these real-time (as opposed to turn-based) wargames that deals with a real scenario. With a selection of scenarios based on real offensive strikes in Europe during World War II, the game should appeal to fans of *Dune II* and wargame strategists alike.

Using a novel, isometric viewpoint and some splendid looking undulating terrain, the game is also set to look as good as it could, potentially, play.

Developed specifically for Ocean, the *Offensive* brand could end up being a tag for future products in a similar way to *TFX*. There are already rumours of an American Civil War game based on the same engine, and Ocean's producers inform us that the system can be adapted to just about anything.



DIY Doom: Thy Chocs Consumed

If you read the review in last month's issue of *Doom: Thy Flesh Consumed*, you'll no doubt be itching to sample the delights of the beautiful sunset feature which graces the new episode. Unless you've got more money than sense, however, you're probably a bit hesitant about parting with 30 smackers just to see a bit of orange sky. Well fear not. Just follow our simple "DIY *Doom: TFC* guide" and you'll be able to see for yourself just whether it's worth all the moolah or not.

Step 1: Go and buy a box of *Quality Street* or *Roses* chocs.

Step 2: Eat all the chocs, but keep the wrappers from the long and thin toffee ones.

Step 3: Separate the see-through orange part of the wrapper from the foil bit and attach it to some glasses (sunglasses will do) with some sticky tape or clear drying glue.

Step 4: Go and buy the original *Doom* game from your local high street store (it's available on import for around £6.99).

Step 5: Insert the *PC Zone* 1000 *Doom* Level Disk that came free with the April '95 issue of the UK's biggest selling games mag and select any level at random.

Step 6: Put the glasses on and play *DIY Doom: Thy Chocs Consumed*, pausing only to change to one of the other 999 levels.

And there you have it, a longer-lasting *Doom* experience for around ten quid – and you get to eat some choccies, too. Super!

Sea Legends

Fans of games like *Pirates* and *High Seas Trader* will be keen to get their hands on the next product due for release from Ocean.

Designed as a trading/strategy/combat game, set on the high seas, the game looks set to bring this genre of game smack bang up to date.

One unusual aspect of the product is that it has been developed in Russia and has a very distinctive graphical style... much like that of the Russian animated films that were put out on BBC2 over Christmas.

All being well we'll bring you a review of *Sea Legends* in next month's *PC Zone*.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Annoyed by cutesy wutesy, teeny weeny graphics cluttering
your screen as your computer sits groaning in an idle torpor
on your desk?

Do you wish to inflict an unspeakable atrocity on those flying
toasters and floating fish that plague your valuable space with
annoying frequency ?

Then get some fear...the DOOM 2 Screen Saver is here!

Experience your jaw drop on the keyboard, your mouse run
for cover and your eyeballs bulge to bursting point in disbelief
as all hell breaks loose in front of you.

This Doomtastical splatterfest runs riot through four
different modules as the vilest creatures from Doom 2 parade
via a fully automatic installation program.

The Doom 2 screen saver invades Microsoft Windows 3.1,
Norton Desktop for Windows and Berkeley Systems' After
Dark 3.0 with ease.

Available from good stockists everywhere





(Left) It's been a bloody long time coming, but *Iron Angel* looks like it's getting close to being finished.

Iron Angel

THIS IS ONE OF THOSE GAMES THAT HAS HAD news items written about it for more than a year now. Originally announced round about the same time *Inferno* came out, this is one of those projects that has obviously turned out to be far more ambitious than its developers originally thought.

Placing you in control of the awesome Iron Angel super-fighter, your job is to defend your country from, well, er... just about anything. The whole thing is set in the future and the basic idea behind the game is that weaponry has

gotten so advanced that things like nuclear warheads and Star Wars satellites are easily knocked out by more modern guns and lasers. In response to this, virtually all warfare is now performed in ludicrously powerful fighter craft, which can fly in space as well as in normal atmosphere.

As you would expect, the game involves an awful lot of shooting at things and boasts some very impressive polygon graphics, which run in both VGA and SVGA. The ground detail in the game is actually so detailed that there are even curtains hanging in the windows of the buildings!

No firm release date has been set for *Iron Angel* yet, but Ocean is keen to release the game before the end of the year. Hopefully we'll be bringing you an in-depth preview along with an interview with the team within the next couple of months.

DWANGO UK?

One of the hottest new networks in the world has to be the recent DWANGO system (Doom Worldwide Area Network Gaming Organisation), which has recently been set up by iD. Coded by none other than John "Mr Doom" Romero, the system allows players from all over the world to play four-player Deathmatches.

The game works in a very similar way to the SETUP program that you're used to using in a normal version of *Doom*. You dial into the system, enter your details and then hang-out in a sort of DWANGO foyer-type thing, where you can chat to other players before assembling a team and then heading off for a match. As you would expect, everyone has a suitably silly name, but there are some really mean *Doom* players that hang out on the system – so watch out!

Aside from the DWANGO system itself, there is also a supporting BBS, which is filled to over flowing with specifically designed Deathmatch WADs and other amusing *Doom* paraphernalia.

It all sounds rather splendid really, doesn't it? Shame that all of the existing servers are a trans-Atlantic call away. Aha! But all is not

lost, it would appear that a European version is set to be unleashed before the end of the year – Hoorah.

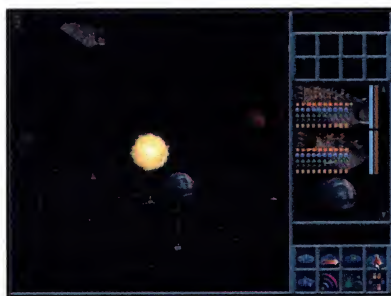
It's not just *Doom* that can make use of DWANGO, though. There are already *Terminal Velocity* sites in operation in the States, and many developers are building the comms facilities of their products around the DWANGO connectivity system. *EF2000*, for example, is rumoured to be capable of supporting a 512-player DWANGO link.

If you've got a really impressive system with an ISDN link, you can even dial directly into an Ethernet-based network on the system. Mere mortals, however, can dial in with modems from 9.6k baud and above.

If you want the connectivity software for DWANGO, it comes free with all shareware versions of *Doom* and *Heretic*, and you can also find a copy on the Ultimate *Doom* CD.

We'll be bringing you a feature on DWANGO as soon as we know when the UK system will be up and running. In the meantime, we are still waiting for John Romero to confirm a date for the ultimate DWANGO showdown... Macca versus iD. Watch the "Doomwatch" pages for more news.





(Left) *Ascendancy* from Virgin: a) looks jolly splendid; and b) looks incredibly complicated.



Ascendancy

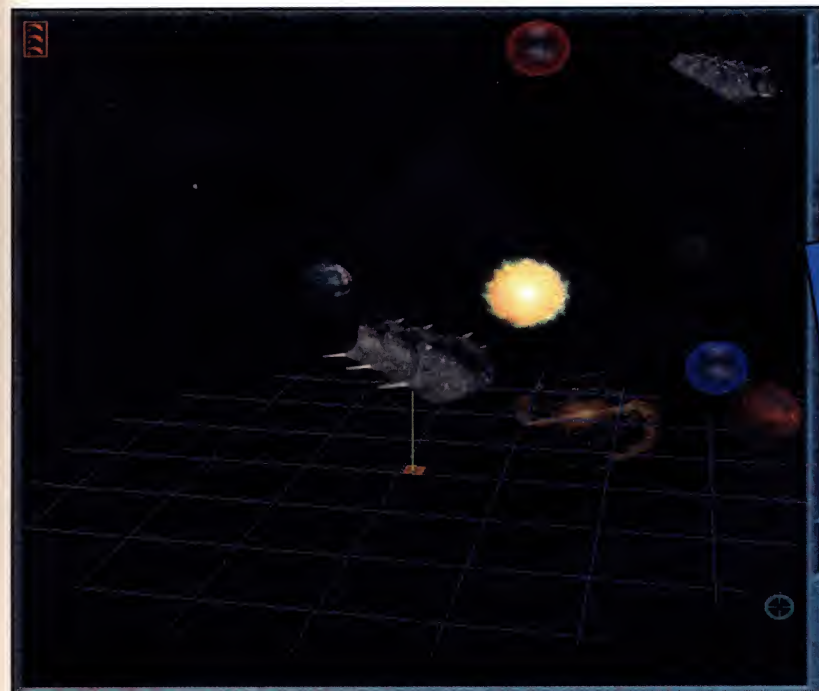
SET FOR RELEASE THROUGH VIRGIN Interactive Entertainment this October, is the first game from the newly-formed Logic Factory team. Managed by ex-Origin Systems chaps, Jason Templeman and Thomas Blom, the new firm is hitting the PC market with a very elegant looking game, which, allegedly, blends elements of exploration, diplomacy and competition.

Designed to simulate the ascendancy (Ah! Clever title) of a single race on a distant planet, the game puts you in charge of a race of beings as they compete with numerous others to

become the dominant species on the planet. By cultivating the planets resources and making use of available technology to invent new and more useful tools, the game takes you through various gaming elements, which look to me as though they draw on both *Outpost* and *Civilization* for inspiration.

Featuring svGA visuals throughout and a variety of helpful features, such as context sensitive on-line help and an interactive training mode, the game should prove to be very impressive.

Make sure you watch out for our Blueprint on it next month.



Pole Position: Formula One Team Manager

Due for release this September is the first of a considerably number of Formula One team management simulations. As we've mentioned in our *F1GP2* feature this month, MicroProse is due to launch a product before the end of the year, but in the mean time Ascon Software is set to launch its simulation.

Featuring rendered in-race graphics, all aspects of team management, from tactics to sponsorship, as well as simulated press conferences (!) the game looks as though it will be an interesting alternative to *Football Management*.

Pole Position (I wonder how Atari Games feels about the use of that name?) is scheduled for release in early September.



Key

- ▲ Higher position than last month
- ▼ Lower position than last month
- ◆ Same position as last month
- New Entry
- RE Re-Entry

GALLUP CHARTS

What's selling really well at the moment then? Not always what you'd think. Despite what we say in our incredibly informative and exceptionally witty reviews, it still seems that you lot aren't sitting up and paying attention. Some of you obviously have a masochistic desire to waste money...

Top 20 Full Price Titles

1. Doom 2	▲	Virgin
2. Sim City 2000	◆	Maxis
3. Ultimate Soccer Manager	▼	Impressions
4. Theme Park	▲	Bullfrog
5. X-Wing/B-Wing/IMP. Pursuit	RE	US Gold
6. FIFA International Soccer	RE	Electronic Arts
7. Sam & Max/Indiana Jones/D... Tentacle	RE	US Gold
8. TIE Fighter	▼	LucasArts
9. NASCAR	▲	Virgin
10. Discworld	▼	Psygnosis
11. Dawn Patrol	RE	Empire
12. TFX	▲	Ocean
13. Premier Manager 3	▼	Gremlin Interactive
14. Microsoft Flight Simulator V5.1	●	Microsoft
15. Comanche Super Pack	RE	US Gold
16. Fantasy Manager	RE	ANCO
17. Colonization	▼	MicroProse
18. X-Wing	RE	US Gold
19. Frontier: First Encounters	▼	Gametek
20. Best of Windows Entertainment	●	Microsoft

Top 10 PC Budget Titles

1. Magic Boy	RE	Empire
2. Brian Lara's Cricket	●	Audiogenic
3. Detroit	●	Impressions
4. Doom (MS)	RE	Micro Star
5. Universal Clip Art: Batman/NFL	●	Advantage Point
6. Dune 2	▼	Hit Squad
7. World Class Rugby	RE	Audiogenic
8. Lottery (Win)	▼	VCI Software
9. Monkey Island 2	RE	KIXX
10. Easy to Learn Computing	▼	Premier Collection

Top 10 CD-ROM Titles

1. Star Trek TNG: A Final Unity	RE	MicroProse
2. FX Fighter	●	GTE/Philips
3. Theme Park	RE	Bullfrog
4. Full Throttle	▼	LucasArts
5. IndyCar Racing	▲	White Label
6. Discworld	▼	Psygnosis
7. Flight Unlimited	▼	Looking Glass
8. Dark Forces	▼	LucasArts
9. FIFA International Soccer	RE	Electronic Arts
10. Overlord	RE	The White Label

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OF THE HEAP!

A SERIOUSLY
GOOD VALUE
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FOR EF2000!

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CRAP!

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TIE-IN
EVER

Get Blown Away



To coincide with the imminent release of a game based on the Jeff Bridges and Tommy Lee Jones movie *Blown Away*, we've got 20 copies of the video to give away in this extremely easy to enter competition.

Featuring loads of action and lots of things that go bang, both the game and the video are likely to be extremely successful. To make sure that you stand a chance of getting a copy of the film first, simply answer the following question and send you entries to:

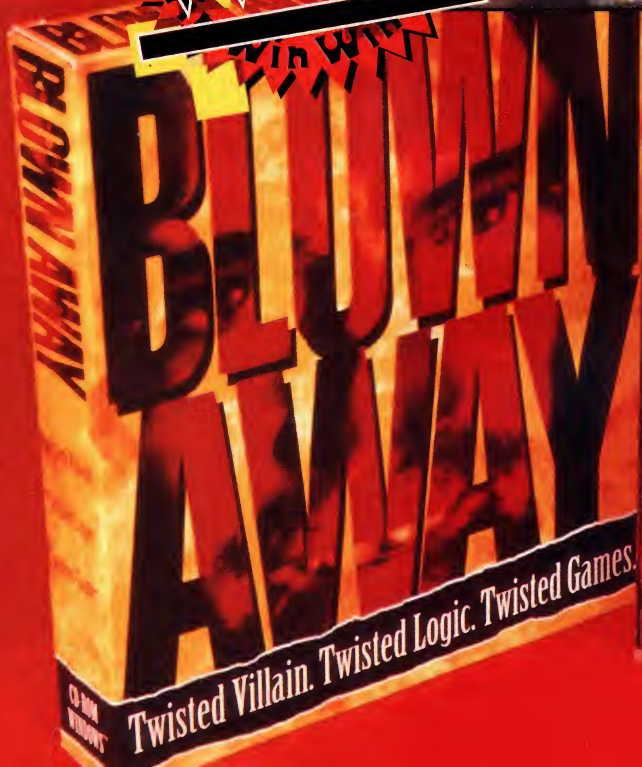
I WANT TO GET BLOWN AWAY

PC Zone
Dennis Publishing
19 Bolsover St
London
W1P 7HJ

Question: In what film does Tommy Lee Jones have more than one face?



WIN!



Free Pizza Offer!!!
PIZZA-U-LIKE PIZZERIA Inc.

Yes, that's right! **FREE PIZZA!** Simply present this coupon to the Muddy Creek Pizza-U-Like Pizzeria and we'll give you a free 10" Mango and Tripe Pizza (unleaded only) Totally **FREE!!!** Alternatively, call the number below and we'll send our infamous Delivery Man, Bud Tucker, straight round to your house!

Hurry, offer ends 1/12/85. Tel: 555-PIZZA-4-U

To The Customer: This is of course, a promotional gimmick for the new Merit PC game "Bud Tucker in Double Trouble", so please don't try to claim any free pizza with it. Unless, of course you are completely stupid.
To The Pizzeria Owner: This is a promotional gimmick for Merit's "Bud Tucker in Double Trouble". Anyone presenting one of these 'vouchers' at your restaurant should be ignored until they leave.



AT HOME WITH... EA SPORTS

This month, **Chris Anderson** puts his life on the line to bring you the latest news on the EA Sports label.



HELLO, GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME once again to *Through the Keyhole*, the column where we take sneaky looks at things we shouldn't, then leg it back pronto to the office to tell you lot all about it.

Getting this month's gossip was far more difficult than I originally expected, I can tell you. Hanging about on a 50-foot ladder with a bucket of water in one hand and a cloth in the other (cleverly concealing my notepad and pocket camera) is not exactly my idea of fun. So, there I was, swinging about, whistling (it made my incredibly convincing window cleaner disguise look more convincing, you see) and occasionally rubbing the window of the PR guys' office with my cloth, when Nick Channon, the man in charge of PR for the EA Sports label, walked into his office.

(Below) Meet computer wizards and all-round jolly good fellows, the EA sports team.



"Who the bloody hell are you?" he inquired suspiciously. "I'm the window cleaner, guv," I explained.

"But my windows aren't dirty," he said.

"Yes they are, there's a tiny bit of dust on this one, right in the top left corner. I'd better get it off before anyone notices," I replied.

"Oh alright, but be quick about it," he shouted irritably, before sitting down in front of his Pentium 120 and switching it on. I nearly fell off my ladder when I saw him load up an ice hockey game with gorgeous graphics and immediately blurted out "Blimey, what's that, mate?". "It's the latest version of our splendiferous ice hockey game, *NHL 95*," he explained.

"What's it called?" I asked. "*NHL 96*," he said proudly. "Blimey, that's original," I enthused.

"Bloomin' right it is," he said "And it's not just the name that's changed either. All the sprites and animations have been completely redone using silicon graphics, so they now look even better. As you can see, the players look incredibly realistic. They play better, too. We've improved the artificial intelligence so the defences and goalies are more difficult to beat. We've also



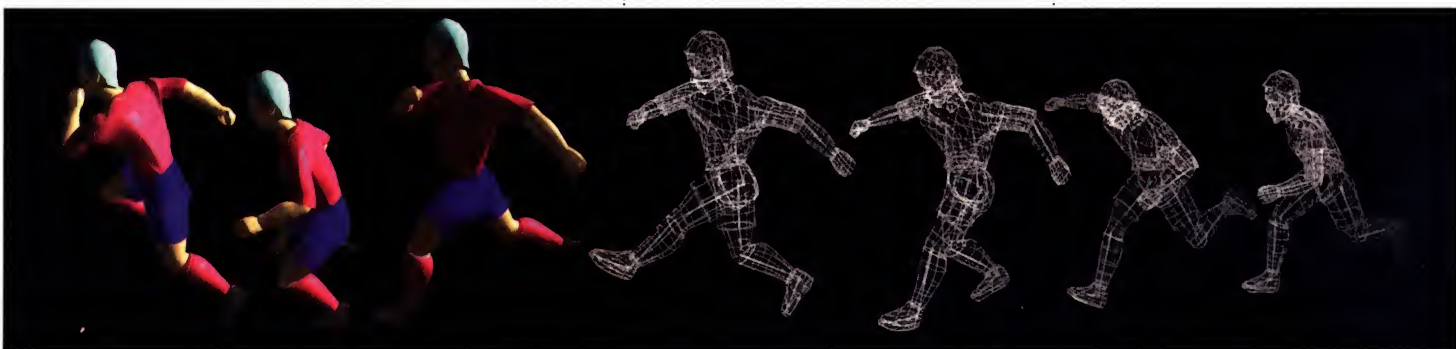
incorporated a brand new feature called "virtual stadium technology" into the game, so there's lots of camera views and they're all absolutely amazing. It really, really is just like being there".

He paused for a moment and a look of total wonder crossed his face, as though he had realised for the first time that *NHL 96* was poised not only to break all records for game sales and revolutionise the computer game industry, it was going to change the world. While he was entranced I took a piccy. He continued...

"As if all that wasn't enough, we've even improved the sound. You get eight different CD-quality soundtracks for the menus and CD-quality crowd chants during the game".

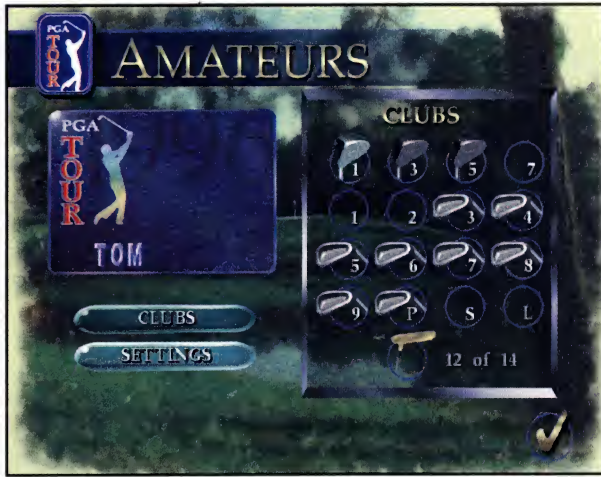
"Bloody hell!" I said, pressing my cloth against the window and scribbling down all this extremely interesting info in my notepad.

Nick went into overdrive... "And wait till you see this, it's the new version of *PGA Tour Golf*". He exited the hockey game and loaded up the most incredibly detailed golf game I have ever seen. "It's been completely enhanced," he went on excitedly, "There's a new improved user interface, PGA Tour film footage, multiple TV style views of all the golfers and photo-realistic golfer swings.





(Left) The brand new improved NHL Hockey. Not only have the graphics been enhanced, but there's a host of excellent new features in the game too.



(Left) PGA Tour 96 will have all the options and features you could possibly hope for in a golf game.

(Far left) Super slick silicon graphics are predominant in all the new EA Sports games.

There's also some really flash realtime Fly By views of all the courses, all user controllable, so you'll be able to take a good look at each hole before deciding how to approach it. We've also tried to make sure the game will have something for everyone by including stroke, skins match and tournament play types."

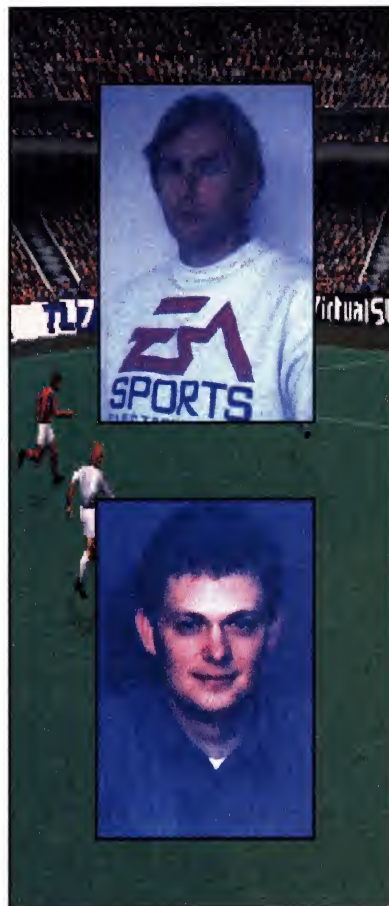
This last revelation struck a particular chord with me. I play *Links* with my mate Rob Fisher (he used to be in Climie Fisher you know, he even knows Rick Astley and we drink together and everything). (Get on with it, Ed.) Anyway, being the sad bastards that we are, we play against each other, taking turns on each hole and totting up the scores as we go along. A match play option would save all this faffing, so you can be sure we will be switching to the new PGA when it comes out.

I was still taking all this in when Nick took another disc out of his drawer and

loaded it up. "This is *FIFA 96*," he said, "there's still a lot of work to do but it's shaping up very nicely. The game uses 32-bit technology to deliver stunning graphics and speed. There are even more camera angles than were used in the original game and new sound technology, so John Motson's commentary sounds incredibly realistic. We are confident the new *FIFA* has the most sophisticated computer intelligence ever created for a soccer game, with players reacting to the different coaching strategies you've selected and more intelligent computer players making for more challenging gameplay. There's also actual footage of some of the game's greatest moments and an option to create your own league if you so desire."

So that was it then, mission accomplished. With all this exciting info I was ready to leg it back to the office and type up my feature. As I

climbed back down the ladder I could still hear Nick singing the merits of the new EA Sports range: "Revolutionary," he proclaimed. "World dominating!" he shouted proudly. From what I'd just seen, he may not be far from the truth. **Z**



(Left) Bruce McMillan, executive producer for the excellent FIFA games.

(Left) Nick Channon, PR chap for the EA Sports label and befriender of dodgy window cleaners.

What's in an upgrade?

Many people take a cynical view of EA's policy of enhancing its sports games every year and putting them out at full price. Admittedly, on the surface, it seems like you're just getting the same games again with a few bells and whistles, but if you look at the 96 versions of these games, you'll see they have been significantly enhanced to make the upgrade worthwhile.

The graphics aren't just better, they're *much* better. All the games will

have an on-line multimedia encyclopaedia, giving you a detailed insight into the history of the sport in question. Choc-a-bloc with new features and enhancements, if you like the existing versions, you'll love the new ones, and if you haven't got the games at all, you're in for a treat. So I say to the cynics, wait until you've seen the new products before you pass judgement!

All the products featured here are scheduled for release in the Autumn.

HIGH END SOUND →

FOR PEOPLE WHO

DON'T HAVE MONEY

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← REAR END.

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The Need for Speed

High performance cars?
Only one man for the job.
Warren Christmas used to
own a VW Polo, you know.

STATISTICS SHOW THAT 93.2% (MUFF poll, '94) of males aged between 12 and 14 have pictures of topless girls and/or supercars on their bedroom walls. Go on admit it - you were once a dreamer too, weren't you?

Of course, as you get older you realise that you have to lower your standards a tad. You may have some experience of handling something slightly inferior to your dream model by the time you're 18, but what about the cars? Well, compromise is needed here too, I'm afraid. Face it: you're never going to own a Ferrari 512TR, okay? You're just going to have to make do with a simulation.

Electronic Arts can't give you the chance to "sample" Cindy Crawford (not yet anyway), but with *The Need for Speed* (TNFS) it can at least let you take one of eight high-performance monsters for a spin, including an Acura NSX, Dodge Viper RT/10, Lamborghini Diablo VT, and the easy-to-handle but slow Porsche 911 (well, when I say slow...). The objective of the game? What d'ya think? To drive bloody fast, of course.

Test Drive

The PC version follows the 3DO original released earlier this year which, while almost universally acclaimed for its exceptional graphics and slick



(Left) Worthing was strangely quiet for the time of year.

presentation, suffered from a couple of major design flaws. Firstly, it didn't really give the impression of high speed (unfortunate considering the name), and worse, there were just three tracks.

Thankfully the beta PC version, which we've test driven (hem), not only shifts at a fair old lick, but includes all of the original features and more. Aside from racing against a computer-controlled challenger, two players can now compete by either driving alternately or head-to-head via modem/serial link. And then there's the individually sampled engine noises and effects (in Dolby Surround Sound), the multimedia guide to each of the cars, the full replay option and, ooooh, lots more besides. And the tracks? There's now a grand total of eight, including a test circuit with nifty

Product details

Developer: Electronic Arts

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549442

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: September

high-speed banked corners. Hurrah!

Aside from this test track, all of the races take place on public roads. You see TNFS isn't your typical arcade racer. This is a real driving sim. Sounds boring? Well imagine travelling at 130mph, nudging your challenger's car from the side, with cars milling around, covering both lanes ahead of you and with the image of a police car (with sirens blaring) filling up your rear view mirror. Still sound boring?

I luurve to handle you...

But it's the handling of the cars that should ensure TNFS is as popular with PC owners as it is with 3DO-ers. Never has the driving experience been so accurately portrayed in a computer game. You can even do hand-brake turns! You see, EA hasn't just made the computer models up; it has actually recreated each car's handling attributes, the body roll, the acceleration, lateral G capability and so on, by studying the physics models and consulting writers from the top American car magazine *Road & Track*. And the results are very, very impressive. So just imagine what the finished version's going to be like! **Z**



(Left) This is the in-car view. Oi! Get the fuck out of my way.

(Below) "What d'ya mean, you couldn't afford the insurance?"



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DEMOS
See Page 4

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The EF2000

- Exceptional agility in both supersonic and subsonic combat
- Short field performance
- Advanced attack radar complemented by infrared search and track system
- Helmet-mounted sight and display system
- Low radar cross-section

The EF2000 is designed to be an unstable aircraft and is held in the air by an effective fly-by-wire system. The instability is used to allow the aircraft to make use of gravity to aid its manoeuvrability. This could not be managed by conventional pilot-operated controls.

Residing in an office that looks uncannily like a night club, the bods at DID are putting the finishing touches to something that could change the way we look at flight sims on the PC forever. **John Davison** crawls his way to Warrington to take a look.

EF2000

(Right row) DID has plenty of ideas for making future versions even more realistic.



IN PRODUCTION



MARTIN KENWRIGHT IS THE MD OF DID (Digital Image Design) and after meeting him a number of times over the years I have come to the conclusion that he is one of life's lucky bastards. The first time we met him, he'd been working on *F-29 Retaliator*, a well produced but unfortunately flawed flight sim that hit the ST and the Amiga. The next time he was peddling this TFX thing that Ocean had signed up which everyone agreed was rather jolly impressive.

he owns a castle (yes – a castle) and is about to install a jet fighter wing and ejector seat into his boardroom before sinking the rest of the plane into a lake outside his castle. And to top it off he's just produced one of the most impressive looking flight sims ever.

Military Level Intelligence

Now I know we try not to pass any real critical comment when we do a Blueprint, but *EF2000* is one of those games that induces a real gut reaction.

“Whilst this AI system is impressive in itself, it becomes even more snazzy when you learn the playing area for the game is four million square kilometres”

Soon after this we hear that he's signed a six figure publishing deal with Ocean and is starting to produce military-spec flight sims as well as games. And then this time... THIS TIME... he's driving a brand new Ferrari 358GT (red of course),

It's good. Bloody good. Not only does it look spectacular (check out the screen shots – have you ever seen anything like it?) but it quite possibly has more bits of extreme cleverness than any other simulation you've ever seen on the PC.



(Above) You should never find yourself in the same situation twice.

(Left and far left) The propeller heads among you should keep a tissue handy when playing this.

Coming soon

The way in which the TFX series will grow is extremely exciting. Although still only in the planning stages, DID has numerous plans to ensure that simulations on the PC become more and more realistic. First, the team is trying to establish an industry standard electronic battlefield system which will be employed by all major simulation producers. If put into operation this will mean that products such as *Falcon 4.0* and *Apache Longbow* could end up being interfaced with TFX branded products.

Second, the TFX series will be able to share data between products. *EF2000* is only the first in the new series and, in future, we can expect to see Russian aircraft with their own scenarios. But the planes and the scenarios are intended to be interchangeable – so you'll be able to fly as the Russians in the *EF2000* Norwegian battle.

Finally, the DWANGO (Doom Worldwide Area Network Gaming Organisation) multi-player network system has expressed an interest in *EF2000* and is currently proposing a 512 player world-wide dial-in air war. Scary eh? The game already features an eight-player network option.

Set during a hypothetical war in northern Europe, the game not only features an exceptionally clever flight combat model (which I will come to in a minute or two) but it also has an incredibly advanced AI-based battlefield generation system. This new system is allegedly as powerful as that used in training facilities by the military, and effectively fights an entire war based on millions of statistics and elements in which you are only a small part. The upshot of this is that every time you play the game, you'll never come across the same conflict scenario twice.

Whilst this AI system is impressive in itself, it becomes even more snazzy when you learn that the playing area





(Left) Check out the view. Pretty bloody impressive, huh?

(Below) Norway was chosen for the battlefield because it's full of fjords, mountains and, er... Norwegians.

for the game is actually four million square kilometres, and all of this has been reproduced from military maps and charts. The thing is though, there are vehicles and armed forces all over this map and the TFX battlefield system keeps track of what everything is doing - all the time. Pretty impressive, huh?

Flight Models with knobs on

When TFX was originally released there were an awful lot of people who were more than a little impressed with the flight model employed by the game... especially in the rock-hard and ninja-tastic military-spec mode. EF2000 takes this one step further and has been produced with the aid of declassified information gleaned from Nato and British Aerospace, as well as comments made by test pilots of the EF2000 itself. Although not really qualified to comment on the realism, I do have to say that this feels incredibly real. And I was quite fortunate that when I visited DID there was a geezer from the RAF

The world at war

The basic idea behind the conflict in EF2000 is that the Russians have stopped being the good guys and have gone and gotten all stropky. In an attempt to give northern Europe a kicking, the Ruskies have moved into Norway and are gradually working their way south. With Norway under Russian control, the air and land forces would be in an ideal position to swoop down and slap Nato right in the chops.

Sound a bit familiar? Yes we thought so too. But it took us a couple of days of banging our heads together and trying to remember the last time we read a book. Eventually we sussed that the whole thing was very similar to Tom Clancy's *Red Storm Rising*. So, if this Blueprint has whetted your appetite somewhat, you could go out and buy a copy of the book while you're waiting.

Product details

Developer: DID

Publisher: Ocean

Telephone: 0161 832 6633

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: October

sitting right behind me as I played it. Hearing someone who has actually flown the real thing say things like "Oh yes, that was absolutely spot on" is probably about as much of a recommendation as you're ever going to get. The propeller heads among you lot are going to cream over this.

But it's not all AI, fancy physics and maths, though. Oh no. You see, it looks incredible as well. One of the reasons that Norway was chosen as a combat zone is the tremendous variety in the scenery: you've got watery bits, snowy bits, bits with trees and bits with lots of buildings. And all of them look absolutely fantastic - especially in SVGA. The code for the game is apparently efficient enough to crank out SVGA graphics in full detail at a rate of 50fps if you've got the hardware to do it (namely a very high spec Pentium). On top of this, though, it will also be one of the first products on the market to be optimised for the new GLINT graphics processor set for release later this year. **Z**



DID goes military mad

One of the things that has really proved that DID knows exactly what it's doing when it comes to simulations is the fact that it's not just propeller heads like our Bradders that think the products are good. No, there are other people out there who are impressed, people who work for little tin-pot organisations like, er... Nato for example and, er... who else? Oh yes. The RAF.

Pardon? Yes, since the original TFX was released two years ago, Mr Kenwright and his merry band have been approached by numerous military organisations to produce training simulators that range from flight combat to tank sims.

Possibly the most widely used of these training systems is the Sigma Flexible Cockpit Trainer which is produced by Data Sciences. This project is now installed in several airbases around the UK and is used to train pilots in various skills ranging from in-air refuelling to full-on combat. The unit itself comprises a mock cockpit (not unlike that which you can buy from propeller-head outlets like RC Simulations) housing two PCs - a Pentium that produces all of the TFX "outside" graphics and a 486DX that runs three monitors showing the MFDs (multi-function displays) inside the cockpit itself. The Sigma system has proved to be very successful, mainly due to its inherent low costs. And when EF2000 is released commercially DID is expecting to upgrade Sigma with the new software.



Hi-Octane™



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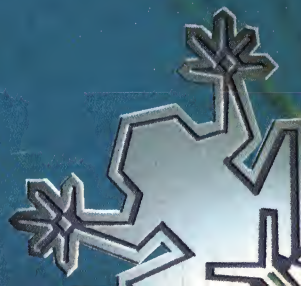


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Fade to Black, the latest offering from Delphine, is the follow-up to **Flashback**, and everybody's very excited about it. Well, almost everybody. **Patrick McCarthy** finds the exception.



Fade to Black

THE SCENE: A SEEDY HOTEL ROOM, lit only by a flashing neon sign outside the window. The telephone rings. An unshaven man in a vest answers it.

Conrad Hart: [For it is he] Oui?

Voice: Monsieur Popo?

Hart: Ou est thees?

Voice: Est-ce-que vous êtes Monsieur Popo?

Hart: [Lighting a Gauloise] Ou wants de knowez?

Voice: Come now, Popo. We knowez qu'il est vous.

Hart: So pourquoui vous keep askez if it's moi?

Voice: Par-ce-que nous sommes très careful...

Hart: Vous still have not said who vous êtes...

Voice: Je think that vous already knowez.

Hart: Quoi?

Voice: Thinkez about it...

Hart: [Thinks] ...Ooooh, non. Merde. [Coughs]

Voice: [Chuckles]

Hart: Bollocques... [Launches into a coughing fit]

Voice: So vous rememberez, Monsieur Popo. Or should I say... Conrad Hart?

Hart: [Coughs harder, until forced to spit blood. He aims for the window, but instead hits some stained underpants, hanging up to "air"] C'est bloody Delphine again, n'est pas?

Voice of Delphine: Oui. C'est Delphine.

Hart: Mais je still not recoverez from the last time...

Delphine: Vous soundez fine to moi.

Hart: Non, non. Je suis très mal. J'ai une back, er, bad. Est mon tête est like, er... like un *Nine Inch Nails* concert est taking place dans la, et as for mon testicles — ils sont like deux ballons de football.

Delphine: Complét avec les spots est les laces?

Hart: Non, mais ils sont pretty damn énorme... C'était all that jumping about. Ils avez sweller up something chronic.

Delphine: Mais très bien... Parfait pour pulling les chicks, hein? Ho ho ho.

Hart: Not again. Vous can't make me. Je ne do it pas. Je suis sick to mort

de bloody morphing robot security androids beating le crap out of moi, pools de dripping acide, les plateformes électrique et treacherouse, et wearing les training shoes blanc —

Delphine: Vous will be starring in it, 'Art. Votre contract states it clearly.

Hart: Oh, oui? Et how est vous going to make me?

Delphine: Nous avez votre teddy.

Hart: Quoi? Ne pas le teddy silk, avec les tassles?

“Not again. Vous can't make me. Je ne do it pas. Je suis sick to mort de bloody morphing robot security androids...”

Hart: Vous knowez some chicks très peculiar.

Delphine: Watchez votre lip, monsieur. Or le game nouveau might get un petit peu... harder.

Hart: [Silence]

Delphine: 'Art? Est-ce-que vous êtes still there?

Hart: Quoi? Mes ears est faulty, aussi... 'Ello? Pardon, mais je ne hear you pas bien, so je might as well hang up —

Delphine: Vous can hear parfaity well.

Hart: Non, honest, je ne hearez at all well. Pour exemple, just now je thought vous said something about —

Delphine: 'Art. Nous avez un game nouveau, est vous est going to be starring dans it.

Delphine: Non. Le teddy furry, avec les glassy yeux et les dribble marks sur son chest.

Hart: Pipi!

Delphine: Oui.

Hart: Vous bastards... Waitez. How do je knowez que vous tellez le truth?

Delphine: Un moment. [Holds bear up to phone and tips it up]

Bear: Mooo-ooo...

Delphine: Mooo?

Hart: Pipi! Est-ce-qu'il a hurtez vous?

Delphine: [Looks at bear] ...Mooo?

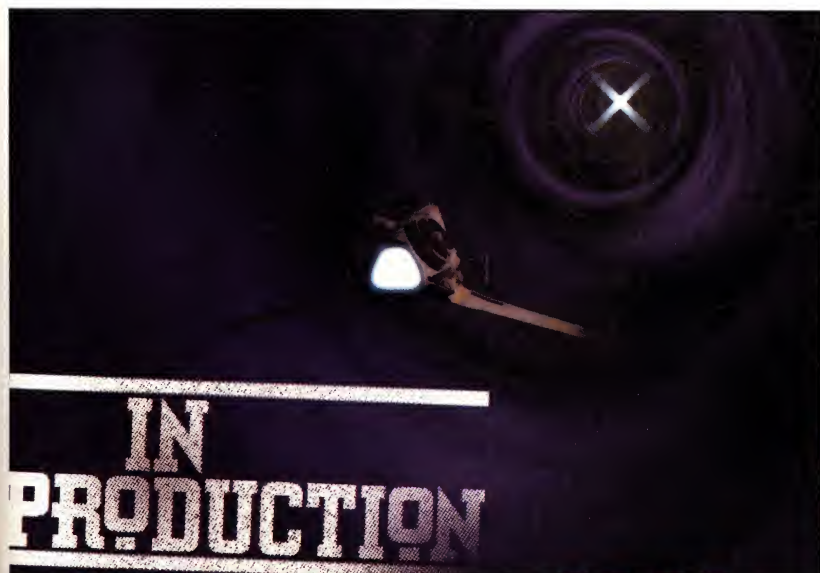
Hart: Je suis on mon way. [He reaches for the blood spattered underpants and puts them on] If vous avez hurtez Pipi, je killez vous.

Delphine: Mooo?

(Right) Hein? Il lookez tout different...

(Far right) ...Il n'est pas any longer un game plateforme.





Scene Two

A maximum security game development site

Delphine: Bienvenu. 'Art. Je see what *vous* means about les testicles. Ils sont très grands. Ils ressemblent deux barrage balloons dans un carrier bag.

Hart: See? Je told vous so.

Delphine: Mais nous artistes graphiques can soon sort that out avec un bit de tricquerie. Vous might still run a bit funny, though.

Hart: Ou est Pipi?

Delphine: Not so fast, Monsieur 'Art. Quand vous completez le game, nous talkez about Pipi. Until then...

Hart: Vous êtes un git grand.

Delphine: Alors, le game. Vous êtes travelling back to votre home planet apres le game previous. Vous êtes en suspended animation.

Hart: Like Michael Jackson?

Delphine: Oui, c'est vrai. Mais le Systeme Solar —

Hart: MC Solaar et dans le game?

Delphine: Non! Ne pas MC Solaar, cretin! Le Systeme Solar... anyway, il est taken over by les aliens superior. Ils sont très intelligent. Et très naughty.

Hart: Merde.

Delphine: Ils controllez un autre set des aliens: les Morphs — qui est nothing to do avec Tony Hart, before vous askez — et whose metabolism lets them changez into —

Hart: Pas again.

Delphine: — allows them to changez, as I was saying, into any shape ils feelez like.

Hart: What, even une slice de tart bakewell?

Delphine: Oui.

Hart: Even un grand hairy winkie?

Delphine: Oui.

Hart: Even —

Delphine: Vous êtes playing for time. Gettez vous into le game. Vous must contacter le Résistance, qui est called Madragore, et teamez up avec un homme qui s'appelle John O'Connors — like le geezèrre dans *Terminator*, mais different.

Hart: Je can hardly wait. Hold mois back...

Scene Three

In the game.

Hart: Hey!

Delphine: What?

Hart: Il lookez different! Il n'est pas un game platforme!

Delphine: Oui, il est très sophisticated, non? Le sideways-on platform game est no more. Cette game avez beaucoup de camera angles instead. In fact, les camera angles fly about all over le shop, est framez l'action automatique.

Hart: Oooh. Je feel un peu sick.

Delphine: Aimez votre gun.

Hart: Blimey. Le view goes derriere mois, d'un premiere-person perspective.

Delphine: Les graphiques sont brilliant, non? Texture-mapped backgrounds, avec



(Below) Oh merde. Je hopez qu'ils avez un toilette ici.

(Below left) Buggrez moi! Le view goes derriere quand je pointez mon pistol.

Product details

Developer: Delphine

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549 442

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: September

3D objects interactive et 3D characters. Fiddlez vous avec les keyboard buttons.

Hart: Ooh, Je suis definitely going to be — aau-uuurgh!

Delphine: Quand le game est complete, vous will be able to adjust les angles de cameras de votre heart's content. Est-ce-que vous avez finished doing le technicolour yawn yet?

Hart: Oui, je ne chunderez pas.

Delphine: Okay. Regardez les autres levels. Il avez arcade adventure action, et le strategy aussi. Et, like *Flashback*, le controls takez more than un peu getting used to. Il est even more complicated.

Hart: Le playeur, il must avez les keyboard skills de Jean-Michel Jarre himself, non?

Delphine: Oui, c'est vrai.

Hart: Et, unless je suis very much mistaken, le game est even more gripping et possiblement even harder than *Flashback* itself, non? (Which was ne pas une pièce de pisse dans la first place).

Delphine: Possiblement. Possiblement.

Hart: Which means mon testicles sont in for another hammering.

Delphine: Oui. Ho ho ho.

Hart: Merde. Où est mon cricket box?

Delphine: Ho ho. Vous n'avez pas de cricket box.

Hart: Oh well. At least je n'avez pas les training shoes blanc... Depuis combien de mois am I going to be stuck en cette joint?

Delphine: Until Septembre.

Hart: Je hopez il avez une toilette... **Z**



Fatal Racing

GREMLIN HAS MADE A FEW VIEWED-from-behind racing games in its time. "And now it has made another. So what's new?" you're probably thinking. Well, for a start, *Fatal Racing* isn't just viewed from behind. You can view the proceedings from an in-car viewpoint, from two outside views and another in-car view with a rear-view mirror option – although, as we all know, only ponces use the rear-view mirror. Who wants to know what losers are up to? Only their mothers. And I bet even *they* won't be interested once you've shown them your hand-painted helmet.

What else is new?

Well, it's bye-bye to those old, seemingly endless stretches of road, lined at regular intervals with trees, boulders, burning prams and axe-wielding pensioners whose only purpose was to stop you straying too far from the road, and which you bounced off of, regardless of your speed and the supposed density of the object. And it's hello to proper circuits, with weaving, banked corners, pits and spectator areas to

plough through. Well, alright, there aren't any spectator areas. And some of the circuits aren't quite what you would expect in the average touring car championship, exactly...

How so?

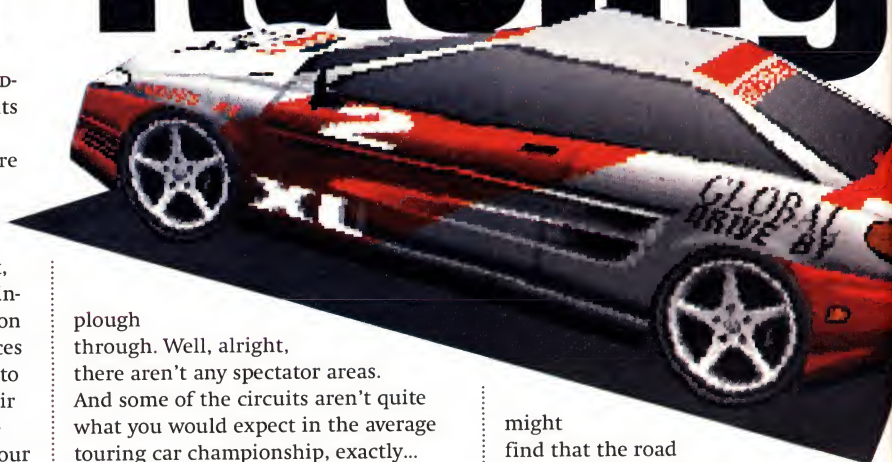
Well, most of the circuits are given over to decidedly perilous stunt sections, not dissimilar to that old Amiga and ST classic, *Stunt Car Racer* (except that in this you're not stuck up in mid-air on a suspended track). For example, you might come haring round a bend with your foot firmly to the floor, and find the track banking steeply to the left. With scarcely a thought, and certainly nothing so poncey as a backward glance (see opening paragraph), you head straight for it. Two seconds later, you're upside down, spiralling madly through the boundless empyrean (as we call it round here) in a steroided-up version of the barrel-roll stunt from that James Bond film with the bloke with the extra nipple in it. On another circuit, you'll find that the whole race takes place on a large and gravity-defying loop-the-loop. Slow down too much on the upside-down bit, and you fall off, land upside down in a steaming, crumpled heap on the track below, and await the battering which will shortly ensue as the other racers tear into you. Or you

might find that the road seems to split into two, and to have acquired a large stretch of concrete in the middle of it that resembles the beginnings of a life-size model of the Lusitania. Not something you would really enjoy meeting head-on at 230mph.

230mph?

Er, yes. We're not sure what's going to happen with that side of things. Given that the cars used seem to look more like fancy versions of a double-glazing salesman's trusty transport than the kind of thing that turns out at Le Mans, the speed readouts do seem a tad high. And although the car's weight shifts authentically on corners and when accelerating, at the moment the handling seems a bit twitchy. But remember sports fans, this is just a very raw version of the game.

Basically, it's another in the current crop of good-looking *Ridge Racer*-inspired racers, with the extra twist of the stunt sections. The sound and graphics are good, and it's certainly fast, so it might be quite a laugh when it's finished. We'll let you know... **Z**



(Below) 251mph in fifth in a souped up Ford Meanda? My butt.

(Below right) The courses are hardly what you'd expect in a touring car championship: They're a lot more fun!

Product details

Developer: Gremlin

Publisher: Gremlin

Telephone: 0114 275 3423

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: October



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Simon Bradley happily admits to being a total aviation person, which is very sad, whatever way you look at it. As such, whenever a company like Mindscape produces a simulator of the baddest fighter ever to bear the red star, he starts to drool and make all sorts of unreasonable promises in the hope that The Editor will let him review it.

THE SUKHOI SU27 (KNOWN IN NATO as Flanker) is one mean son-of-a-bitch. It is big, manoeuvrable and ridiculously overpowered. It has a faster sustained turn rate than the F16, and carries ten (yes, ten) of the most modern air-to-air missiles around. This is not something to mess with unless you are very good, very lucky and very cavalier. It is also truly beautiful, and is one of the best things you will ever see at an airshow. I watched the display by Anatoly Kvotcher at Farnborough a few years ago. Standing with me was a guy from McDonnell Douglas (the folk who make the F15). He watched for a few moments, then turned to me and said "Shit. I'm glad they're on our side now." Like I said, this is one mean aeroplane.

Go play with yourself

So what has Mindscape given us? Well, basically, this is a simulator. If you want a game, go play with something else. If you want to really get involved, then

stick around - I sure you that you will not be disappointed. We'll cut through the intro and briefing areas for the moment, mainly because this is a Beta version and they aren't in yet.

Once you are in the cockpit, you will notice a few interesting quirks. Yes, all the dials are there, as you'd expect, but with a twist. They're in Russian. So are all the legends on the HUD. Not your pseudo-cyrillic like you see in lesser products, though; no, this is the real thing, exactly as you'd see in the actual cockpit. Speeds and altitude are metric, too - something to be aware of when you realise that you're crossing the threshold three times as high and half as fast as you thought. You look out on to a world which, although pleasingly rendered, is not in the same league as *US Navy Fighters* or whatever, but which is better than that in *Tornado* or *Falcon 3*. Switching to an external view, you see an aeroplane which

is perfect in every detail. There are no bits that look wrong, because there are no bits that are wrong. The stores are accurate. The colours and markings are accurate. The nose wheel steers when you work the rudder. Flaps, elevators, rudders, gear and airbrake all work properly, both in function and time. So you hop back into the cockpit. Quick look around, light the fires, flaps down, brakes off, burners in and off you go. The cockpit vibrates as you shoot down the runway, and at this point you stop noticing any limitations in the graphics. Basically, this really is as realistic sim as

I have ever, ever experienced on a PC. Get airborne, clean up and realise that you have to trim this bird - like I said, it's a simulator rather than a game. Pole around a bit to get the hang of it, then hop outside to watch. Turn on the wingtip smokes (really) and play for a while. Look »

IN
PRODUCTION

SU27



at the vortices forming on the wings. Snap roll, loop, tailslide – you can do anything you like with power to spare.

By now, you will probably have found out that you can lose it completely, and that the ejection sequence is really quite amusing. You can recover from the complete horrors you just made manually, or you can use the (real) panic button and the aircraft will try to get itself out of trouble.

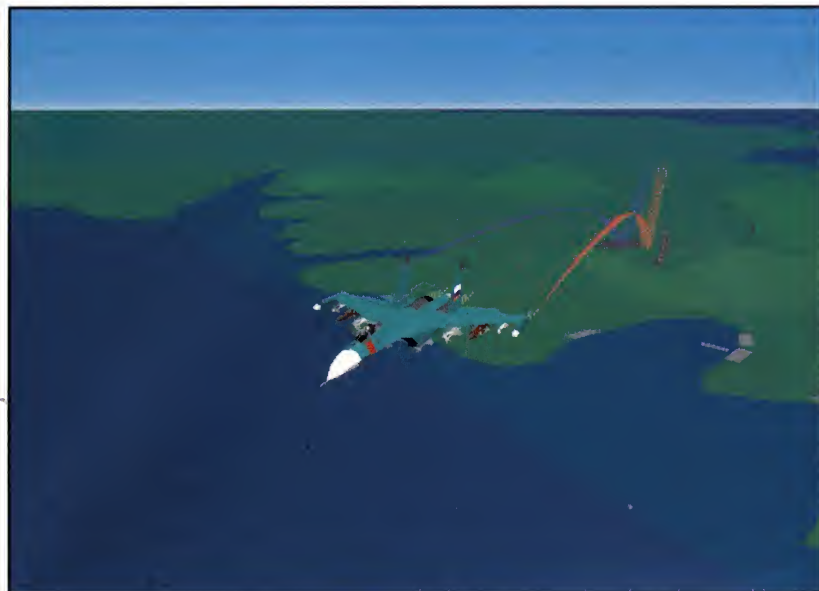
Flanker's cramp

But you aren't really interested in that, are you? You want to shoot things down. And you shall, my child, you shall.

Su27 is set in the Crimea, on the basis that this is a likely area of heated discussion between the Russian and Ukrainian governments, and that it may get unfriendly as a result. Both sides use former Soviet equipment, and are pretty evenly matched. You fly as a Russian, and as such will be up against MiG29s and so on. No Flankers, though – the Russians haven't exported them. None the less, as far as opposition goes, you get the lot – SAMs, AAA, ships, you name it. And they all look and behave like the real things. They have a radar signature, they have blind spots, and they are smart. If a SAM launcher knows you're around but it has something in the way preventing it from locking you up, it will move. And yes, it'll take the right amount of time. And yes again, when it gets there it will do its best to stamp on your choc-ice.

Enemy pilots are a mixed bunch, just like in the real world. Average ones are just that – average. But good ones will make you sweat. And you'll probably get to see that ejection sequence a few more times. There's a good padlock view to help you out, making use of the helmet-mounted sight and HUD repeater which is carried in the aircraft. And once you lock the guy up, he's as good as toast. Have a laugh. Fire a missile and switch to the external view of it. Zoom in and look at the fins. No, you not imagining things, they actually do move as the

(Right) No need to get all pissy about the accuracy of the flight model here.



missile tracks. Attention to detail has not been lacking.

I have a thing about accurate flight models. Nothing ticks me off more than a flight simulator that flies like *Sonic the Hedgehog*. No criticisms at all here. I am led to believe that Anatoly Kvotcher – senior test pilot and the man who displays the aircraft all over the world – has had a hand in the verification of the model. I am not going to argue with the man who tailslides several tons of jet at low level just for the fun of it. All I can say is that this flies just like I'd expect. It's not easy, but then again, nothing worthwhile ever is. Having said that, the panic button is a big help, and the documentation that comes with the simulator gives as much information about staying in the air and avoiding the ground as you could reasonably ask for.

Planning permission

Planning the mission is always part of the fun if you are a real aficionado, and a pain in the arse if you aren't. Either way, you should be happy here. Run with the defaults or change everything other than the objective and enemy activity, the choice is yours. The planner is intuitive and thorough. It also gives you the ability to create a mission from scratch and save it for later, either as a challenge or for the hell of it. You can record your performance for posterity and step in to the playback at any time. Campaigns happen in real time, and as a result your mission performance will

Product details

Developer: SSI

Publisher: Mindscape

Telephone: 01444 246333

Format: CD-ROM and floppy

Release date: October

have an effect on your future missions. As such, planning is very important, and the planner is flexible enough that you can work well ahead of your needs and clear a way to the target if needed.

Networking flight sims always adds another dimension, and *Su27* is going to be networked in some form – possibly as an add on. If this is the case, expect to see multi-player co-operative and multi-player head to head, as well as the more usual head-to-head options. As for no.s supported, we'll have to wait and see, but I'd guess at no less than eight.

No doubt you're wondering what sort of mega PC you need for this. Well, the good news is that a 386DX will do, as long as you have 8MB. You will, of course, get better and faster results on a faster machine, but the design is such that frame rate isn't compromised at all, you just lose some detail. If you're really pushed, you can even use EGA.

I think I love you...

So what is this, then? It seems to be a simulator; it has pretty good graphics, an interesting and believable campaign scenario and a good planner; and it runs on a low-end PC. A miracle? Perhaps, but I'm going to reserve my total adulation for the finished version – after all, I am a journalist and that makes me a cynic. I don't know if this can be as good as it seems, but so far I'm afraid I've seen nothing to make me think otherwise. If Mindscape keeps its eye on the ball, *Su27* will be the King of the Heap by some way. Here's hoping. **Z**



(Left and right) The cockpit of the *Su27* (known by Nato as Flanker) was just the place for Simon Bradley (known by his friends as Wan-).



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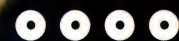


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PC CD-ROM

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Last month we introduced you to a rather spectacular new footie simulation that Gremlin has been developing in-house on the quiet. This month, PC Zone goes behind the scenes to see exactly what it's up to and ask, "Why Chris Woods?". **Jeremy Wells** was our man in the right place at the right time asking the questions and dodging the clichés.

Actua Soccer

Part two



(Above) The goalie bounces his ball before he takes a kick...



(Above Right) ...and players scratch their heads when they've got nothing better to do.

HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT FOOTBALL games tend to go through certain phases? A couple of years ago, football on a computer meant top-down views and extremely fast and playable games, such as *Sensi* and *Kick Off*, which were developed for the Amiga market and were generally jolly good fun, if a little poor in the graphics department.

Next came the console-inspired 3D isometric jaunts, which were graphically "the tops", but failed to deliver in terms of gameplay. Some of these were ported on to the PC with some success - most notably *FIFA Soccer* from EA Sports. Others, such as *Planet Soccer*, *Striker '95* and *Action Soccer* were little more than variations on a theme - graphically "nice" diversions that tended to be tediously slow, sport really naff console-style menu systems, and lacked that special something.

Well thankfully the third phase is just around the corner, and from what we've seen so far, Gremlin seems to be well ahead of the competition. This

time, of course, footie games are finally being developed on the PC for the PC (with the possibility of a PSX version on the horizon). So they're, presumably, going to play to the PC's strengths, which hopefully means top graphics, a strong strategy element and the option to play via a modem or over a network with your mates.

Money = Motion Analysis

Gremlin has already invested a fair wack of cash in some rather wonderful Motion Analysis Technology, which enables it to recreate players who move and behave realistically on screen. However, to ensure an even greater level of authenticity, Gremlin has not just strapped it all up to any old Tom, Dick and Cleaning Lady, and told them to jog about a bit and roll around on the office floor. No, it brought in experts; real footballers (no less than Andy Sinton and Chris Woods) to leap about the place, clutch their shins in feigned agony, adjust their wedding tackle when they line up to make a defensive

wall, scratch their arses in preparation for taking a corner, and do those funny dances when they score a goal. Of course, it also got them to go through the motions of slide tackles, diving headers and scissor kicks too, but that goes without saying really, doesn't it?

The result at half-time...

The results are, to say the least, amazing. At the moment Gremlin has a very rough and unfinished version of the game up and running. This version incorporates just a couple of the motion analysis points, but the animation still looks smooth and realistic. Players actually get up off of the pitch when they've made a tackle in one flowing movement, rather than simply spring into the running position, whilst the goalkeeper bounces the ball on the ground before he makes a kick, and makes some really impressive diving moves. When the game is finished, each player will have over 140 different moves, which they can execute at any one time during the match. Cool!



(Bottom) One of Actua's most impressive features is the multiple camera angles.

(Bottom Right) Player graphics are a far cry from the mini blobbvision of *Sensi*.



Product details

Developer: Gremlin Interactive

Publisher: Gremlin Interactive

Telephone: 01142 753423

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: September



As for the actual player graphics, well as you can see from these early screen shots, they are made up of texture-mapped polygons instead of the more usual blobbo-sprites. And, what's more, they're lovely and big without being too "chunky", even in close-up. A far cry from the mini-sprites that raced around in *Sensi*, I'm sure you'll agree.

So what else is new?

Well, as the AI is far from finished, it's a bit difficult to say how the game plays. Suffice to say that at the moment it's bloody difficult, and that you're a better man than me if you can get that annoying ball in the opposition's half of the pitch, let alone score a goal. However, the difficulty level will be changed to accommodate butter feet like mine by the time *Actua Soccer* is released. Also there's talk of including different difficulty levels in the game so the player can appreciate what it must be like

playing for Scotland against a proper side such as Italy or Brazil.

One of the most impressive features of the game is the multiple camera angles. Think *FIFA Soccer* on the 3DO and you're not too far away, although I would say that in *Actua Soccer* you seem to have more control over how much you see and from what angle. As well as the normal overhead view, there's an over-the-shoulder cam, a ref-cam, a pick any player view-cam, and even a ball-cam. It might take a bit of getting used to, but once you've played a couple of matches and experimented with the different views, it really is quite superb.

Add to all this a complete team edit facility, commentary by Barry Davies; a network option for up to 20 players; and an unusual "five players on one PC" option; and you can safely begin to appreciate that things have finally started to move on a bit from *Sensible Soccer*. And about time too. **Z**



Capturing the spirit of soccer



To make *Actua Soccer* look as close to the real thing as possible, Gremlin has invested \$250,000 in a Motion Analysis System, which allows the game's designers to "capture" the motion of a real-life footballer (or any creature or object) and place it directly in the game. The result is a new level of animated realism that

would be impossible to recreate by hand. Unlike other systems that have been used to animate games, which require the subject to be wired up, Gremlin's motion capture studio is lined with six special CRC video cameras, each fitted with light-emitting diodes that emits a beam of monochromatic light into the performing area for almost total freedom of movement. Small, light-reflecting spheres are then placed at key points (i.e. joints) on the performer. Then, as they jump about and fall over, the spheres reflect the light back into the camera, allowing them to record the motion at up to 120 frames per second. The result is extremely realistic animation and a lot of embarrassing material, which can be used to blackmail the performer... Especially if they happen to be Chris Woods.



(Left) It ain't easy. Here, Jeremy loses to a team of partially sighted synchronised swimmers from Greenland.

(Right) *Actua Soccer* is a game of two halves. The top half here...

(Bottom Right) ...and another half here.



Virtual Karts

Ever since a tattooed gorilla smashed into and wrote off the back end of his Beetle, **Jeremy Wells** has vowed to buy a Saab and use it to ram every Ford Sierra off the road until he gets his man. What better way to get some practice than take the new hi-res racer from MicroProse for a spin.



(Above and above right) Multiple camera angles, network play and a customisable kart – this game has got the lot!

ANYONE WHO'S EVER BEEN KARTING will know that unless you're an anorexic midget with an aerodynamic face and a penchant for curry, you can kiss the chance of spraying that bottle of Pommagne over your colleagues forever. Call me just a bit pathetic, but every time I've actually been karting (and you can count the times on one hand) I've ended up getting in the slowest, naффest contraption ever to sit on four wheels, whose top speed is equivalent to that of an asthmatic ant, carrying a rather large bag of shopping and is desperate for the loo.

True, my experience of karting may not be an entirely accurate representation of the sport that started our Damon on the road to glory. The young Master Hill was not, by all accounts, a regular contender at any of the numerous karting establishments dotted about the M25. No doubt if he had been, he would have huffed a bit, tried to bob up and down in his seat in an effort to propel his kart forward at a greater velocity. And, realising that his efforts were futile and that his kart was about as speedy as the aforementioned insect, decided to never waste his time karting ever again and take up golf or knitting instead (despite having a rather famous racing father and possessing one of the most aerodynamic noses in racing history). Then our last champion would

have been James Hunt (who, coincidentally, also had a rather large hooter), a man who wore extremely large, brown flared trousers and drove an Austin A30 on his days off. Not very 90s at all really.

But it's not really like that!

Thankfully, real karting (or so I'm told) is not like this – it's much faster, and this is why it's a breeding ground for budding F1 champions like our Damon. According to those in the know (who race these things for real), those asthmatic contraptions you get lumbered with on Southend Pier and the environs of the M25 are nothing like the karts found at real karting events. No way, these babies can reach speeds of over 100mph, even if you don't look like a Neanderthal man. Obviously, it helps if your nose is of a similar aerodynamic shape, but when you consider that your average family hatchback struggles to make it past 90 (with or without a roof rack), and you actually sit about an inch off the ground, you can understand why people get hooked.

The simple fact of the matter is speed is thrilling; speed is addictive and any game that can convey a similar feeling via a PC is bound to be a success. Well that's what MicroProse thinks anyway, and when you see what it's done with *Virtual Karts*, you can see it has a point. This game is very addictive, and it's

Product details

Developer: MicroProse

Publisher: MicroProse

Telephone: 01454 326532

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: September

addictive because it's so damn fast and easy to get into. Think hi-res texture-mapped road courses, karts, landscapes and people; network play and a fully customisable kart; think multiple camera angles, and you've got a good idea what *Virtual Karts* is all about.

"Hang on a mo! That sounds just a bit like *SuperKarts*," I hear you cry. Well, yes I suppose it does, just a bit. But whereas *SuperKarts* is best described as an arcade experience, *Virtual Karts* is more of an easy-to-play sim. For starters, you'll be able to deck your kart up however you like before you race (i.e. modify the tyres, chassis, gearing or motor), which will not only give you more control over what you're driving, but introduce an element of strategy and tactics, too.

There's also going to be the option to practice or take part in a single race on any given track or compete in the Grand Championship over numerous courses.

To put it bluntly, it's a more grown-up affair that benefits from not paying lip service to the console-clones, which means there's not a power-up or clichéd cartoon racer in sight. And of course, its got that "grab you by the gonads", super-speed addictiveness quality that keeps you coming back for more. That's enough to keep any adrenaline junky happy, but you'll have to wait until October before you can get into the driving seat and take it for a spin yourself. **Z**

(Right) *Virtual Karts* is going to have the option to take part in a single race on any given track, or compete in the Grand Championship over numerous courses – and there's not a naff cartoon racer in sight!





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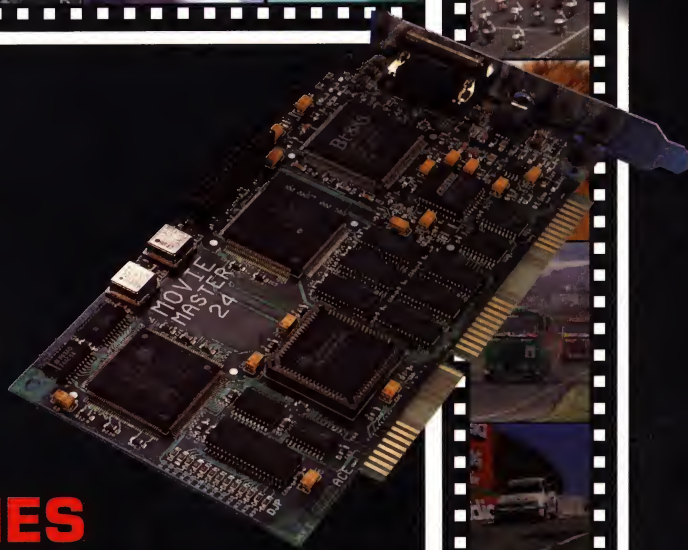
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During the war, "Norwich" used to stand for "Knickers Off Ready When I Get Home", apparently. When we sent **Charlie Brooker** up there for a look at Psygnosis' new 3D robot blaster, he'd already taken his off by the time he'd got on the train.

Krazy Ivan



(Left) *Krazy Ivan* is going to be another big robot game. Is it better than *MechWarrior 2*, though?

(Right) Kristian Ramsey Jones is the producer and designer of *Krazy Ivan* and has designed the game play from a player's point of view.



But hold on a minute. As I'm standing there on the grey studio floor, being quiet when I'm told to, and trying not to trip over a cable or something, a thought pops into my head: What's the point of making all this effort to shoot footage for a game, when it's only going to end up being an irritant to the person who's playing it? I mean, every time you impatiently click your mouse or bash the spacebar to get rid of that FMV cutscene that you've already seen 36 times, you don't care how long it took to film, do you? So why they bothering?

Kristian manages to allay my fears in a trice. He can't be doing with those lengthy, pointless cutscenes either. In fact, he appears to be approaching the whole thing from a gamesplayer's point of view. The video sequences are to be integrated with the action. They are there to explain things that you need to know, and hopefully add a bit of atmosphere and tongue-in-cheek humour to the proceedings.

And the game...?

The game itself is a 3D carnival of chaotic, mechanised carnage set in a futuristic, alien-occupied Siberia. You control Ivan as he wades through acre upon acre of texture-mapped violence and twisted metal, rescuing hostages and shooting anything else that gets in your/his way. Before each mission, you are given the opportunity to make like Jean-Paul Gautier and redesign the suit a little so that it's more to your liking - by means of choosing which piece of weaponry you'd like to hurt things with this time around. The emphasis is on good old-fashioned, cathartic, non-stop, ultra-destruction. And there's nothing wrong with a bit of that now and again, is there? Kristian obviously doesn't think so; when he's describing one of the boss characters to me (it sort of spins around in the air and changes

APPARENTLY THEY USED TO SHOOT *Sale of the Century* in here, you know. But there's no sign of Nicholas Parsons here today. Instead, actor Robin Hellier is standing upright before the cameras, strapped into a "WALDO" suit and practising his lines for the last time before filming starts for real. Meanwhile, sticking out amongst all the rest of the studio staff, with their headphones, mikes, and concentrated frowns, is a man kneeling on the floor like a kid watching a Saturday morning cartoon. The expression on his face is a mixture of fascination and fuelled excitement.

This is Kristian Ramsey Jones, the designer/producer of the upcoming Psygnosis release *Krazy Ivan*, and he's clearly pleased to be here. In fact, in his own words,

today is a "total f**ing buzz". He and the rest of the team are spending two days at the Anglia TV studios in Norwich to shoot footage for the game, against the mandatory blue screen. Now this kind of chroma-key shenanigan has been around for years - you only have to cast your mind back to the heady days of *Rentaghost* to remind yourself how shoddy the finished effect can look. But here they're using a kind of "new and improved" version, which allows them to muck about with the lighting, positioning, and overall look of the thing until you forget about Timothy Claypole and chums forever and just concentrate on how nice it all looks instead.

Stunning cuts

Robin Hellier is *Krazy Ivan*, suspended inside a 40-foot high robot armour suit, which is all the better for knocking the bejesus out of all and sundry.

(Left) Big rendered-looking object ahoy!



(Right) It's a big spinny, flying tank thingy.

Product details

Developer: Psygnosis

Publisher: Psygnosis

Telephone: 0151 282 3000

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: October

shape, and bits fly off it, etc., etc.) his face lights up like someone who's just taken delivery of a truckload of Terry's All-Gold. Here is a man who likes watching things explode. Good for him.

Girls in uniform

The length of all the video sequences put together is only going to come to about 17 minutes, but to make these brief interludes seem even quicker, Psygnosis has hired Sara Stockbridge, erstwhile Vivienne Westwood muse and all-round Tank Girl-a-like, to provide a dash of glamour. Those of you who are into uniforms will be champing at the bit to learn that she spends the entire game decked out in a fetching Russian army number. A walking definition of the word "sassy", she is appearing in a videogame for the first time here.

In between takes, I sit down with Sara, Kristian and another cast member, Michael Brogan, and we have a quick chinwag about computer technology,

games and the future of "interactive entertainment". However, both Sara and Michael are a little apprehensive when prompted to discuss the merits or otherwise of games in general. Sara even thinks that playing non-stop games for hours and hours is "a pretty good way to breed a psychopath". She recognises that there's something inherently sad about sitting alone in a room with a computer. Foolishly, I try to stick up for technology, and recklessly bring the subject of the Internet into the conversation as an example of how using a computer can be a social activity. After a couple of minutes on this subject, however, I notice that eyes begin to glaze over all around me. Michael looks at his watch. And by the time I've got a grip and realised exactly what I've done i.e. bored everybody shitless, they're all back in the studio to pose for some promotional shots. Bugger.

You looking for a fight...?

The game is being released for the PlayStation at the same time as the PC CD version in October. It'll be interesting to see how the PC incarnation compares to its PlayStation counterpart.

Krazy Ivan may well help to prove, if proof be needed, that the PC is now a games platform with a fierce fight on its hands if it wants to remain the connoisseur's choice. **Z**

The other side of Norwich

Bloody hell, eh? Yet another preview feature with loads and loads of photographs of actors standing in front of a blue bloody screen. Yawn yawn yawn...

Oh shut up. Look, when I'd finished taking snapshots of the cast and crew, I went outside into the nasty end of Norwich and used up the rest of my film. Here's the bits of Norwich you won't have seen on the postcards. And the bloody cathedral doesn't feature in any of them. So there.



Q What do you get when you cross one of the world's leading software publishers with loads of lovie actor types?
A A revolutionary interactive movie experience like no other. Jeremy Wells went to Pinewood studios to see exactly what EA, Origin and the British film industry were up to, and do some serious star spotting.

The Darkening

BEFORE WE GO ANY FURTHER, I would like to conduct a little experiment to see if I can read your mind. Nothing too taxing you understand, and I promise it won't hurt a bit. I'll just say a word or phrase and you write down everything that comes into your head on that subject.

Right, here goes: "Interactive movies".
 (Short pause, sound of grey matter whirling into action accompanied by a wry smile.)

I'll hedge my bets a little here, but would I be a million miles away if I presumed you thought of at least four or five of the following: hammy, out of work, two bit actors; *Plumbers Don't Wear Ties*; Mark Hamill; blue screen; FMV; *Wing Commander 3* and *Under A Killing Moon*; Mark Hamill; linear plot and storyline; MPEG; non-interactive; ninja PC required; adventures; nice graphics; and, er, wait a min... Mark Hamill?

So, how did I do? Did I miss anything? (We'll forget the bit about that "adult" CD you picked up at a car boot sale,

shall we?) Almost perfect? Well there you have it; conclusive proof that just about every interactive movie released so far on the PC has been just a bit cack. Or should I say, has the reputation of being a bit cack. So if this is the case, why is it that EA and Origin spending upwards of \$5 million on an interactive movie project?

Big bucks and loadsa lovies

Well, you see, EA being EA want to do something different. It sees the future of PC entertainment as being much closer in terms of production and direction to the movie industry and it's keen to push back the boundaries in an attempt to take the lead. And we're not talking lame movie license deals here, we're talking next generation home entertainment. As Adam Medhurst, Creative Design Co-ordinator, puts it:

"The player has the choice to follow the main plot and multiple sub-plots if he (or she) wishes, or they can just do what the hell they want."

"The Darkening represents the beginning of a new evolution in home entertainment. We're approaching the stage when medium is of no relevance and we aim to be the first to produce a product that is recognisably the next step in interactive entertainment."

And what will make *The Darkening* so different from all the other interactive movie releases that have been forced onto an unsuspecting games buying public, I wonder?

Product details

Developer: Origin Systems

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549442

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: February '96

Adam remains totally unfazed by my scepticism. "There are already more components to *The Darkening* than any other CD release to date. It has so many different facets. The result is a superior world that offers the user a new level of immersion. I want people to go home and play *The Darkening* instead of just turning on their TV sets and watching *Coronation Street*. I want them to interact with real characters, played by people

Store In A Cool, Dry Place

The Darkening is set in a futuristic universe, comprising of eight planets. The player controls the main character, Lev Arris (played by Clive "Chancer" Owen), who awakens from cryogenic storage, after being asleep for ten long years. He was originally diagnosed with a life threatening disease, which was considered incurable, and as a result was put in "cold storage" until a cure could be found.

His pod has been salvaged from the wreckage of a drifting star freighter called "Canera", which was mysteriously attacked by ships of an unknown origin. Lev has lost his memory and now has to find out who he is, where he's been and where he's going. The thing is, to do this, he has to "interact" with various dubious characters, some of whom want to see him dead. The decisions he makes, who he talks to, who he trusts and what he does, will ultimately decide his fate.





seen. Instead, we've opted to build the sets, just as we would if we were making a "normal" movie. That way we can ensure that it is of the same quality as a feature film and uses the same filming techniques, such as multiple camera angles and panning, to give a sense of pace and tension."

And has it worked, I muse?

"It's all so much more intense," argues Adam. "The way that the light reflects off the characters, and the set is infinitely more realistic. Something you could never recreate when you were working with rendered sets."

So it's better than *Wing Commander 3*, I proffer?

"Well, the technology used in *Wing 3* is now over a year old," asserts Adam. "The new video compression software we're using in *The Darkening* is far superior - as good as it's going to get

considering the hardware available at the moment."

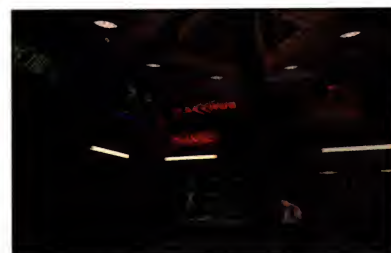
So I'll need an even faster Pentium then?

"Errh. We haven't set a minimum machine specification yet. Although we do recommend an 8Meg machine."

Game, sets and top video compression

A quick guided tour around Studio 2 at the world famous Pinewood Studios (where they are filming a crash scene, and a stunt man is being "blown" through the side of the set), and a quick peek at the rushes is enough to convince me that Adam's got a point.

The quality of the production is much higher than anything yet seen on the PC in terms of atmosphere and quality, and it's, well... it's just so big. Just to give you an indication of the



(Right) Although "interactive movies" have established themselves as a gaming genre on the PC, none (with the possible exception of *Under A Killing Moon* and *Wing Commander 3*) have delivered the goods in terms of interactivity and technical merit. Up until now, that is.

? So Who's In It Then?

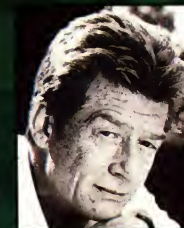


Christopher Walken: Mean and moody mega star with pseudo-psychopathic tendencies and very blonde hair in *The Living Daylights*. Other credits include *The Deer Hunter*, *Wayne's World 2*, *Batman Returns* and *Pulp Fiction*. This man is already a legend.



Clive Owen: Sickeningly successful babe-magnet who has starred in countless films and TV shows, including the rather good

Chancer and *Close My Eyes*. Plays the part of Lev Arris in the game. Admits he "didn't know what to expect" when filming began, and to being "seriously excited" at the prospect of working with "such high calibre actors". The all-new action space dude.



John Hurt: Extremely famous and talented actor, never afraid to suffer for his art. Has appeared in numerous blockbusters including *Alien*, *Scandal* and *The Elephant Man*.

Brian Blessed: Laugh-a-lot, weirdy-bearded bloke, more famous for his thunderous laugh than his appearances in *Flash Gordon*, *Prince of Thieves* and *Henry V*.

David McCallum: The blonde one in *The Men From U.N.C.L.E.* who always got Solo out of trouble back in the '60s, snogged Joanna Lumley in *Sapphire & Steel* in the '70s and more recently got run over in Michael Winner's *The Dirty Weekend*.

Also starring: Amanda Pays, Mathilda May, Jurgen Prochnov and over 500 extras. Gosh.

IN PRODUCTION



“scale of the production, there are seven studios at Pinewood, and EA are filming in four of them.

The sets are massive, and each one is constructed from a special kind of polystyrene, which is then carved into the appropriate shape to give the impression of a stone wall, rock face, prison cell etc. It's then painted, decorated and lit, the actors do their bit, and then it's all torn down to make way for the next set. All in all, a very time consuming and expensive business, with little room for error and re-takes...

Mega sets and mega actors

The atmosphere on set is understandably tense, but I still manage to grab a few words with Aaron Roberts (yes, brother of Chris, of *Wing Commander* fame) the Executive Producer, to talk about the game.

To say that Aaron is very excited about the whole project is like saying a Ferrari is quite a fast car. Having worked as assistant producer on *Privateer*, he now wants to do things his way. “*The Darkening* represents the next generation of the *Privateer/Elite* genre of game. What we're trying to offer the player is more choice, more freedom and get them emotionally involved by giving them real choices instead of just two options, and combine this with realistic characters who give real responses.”

But with all this filming and money you're blowing on mega sets and big name actors, isn't there always the danger that it's going to be just ever so slightly linear? I venture.

“No way!” says Aaron, shaking his head. “Sure, there is an ultimate goal, but there's not just one ending to the



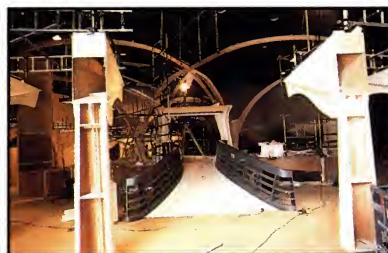
game. The player has the choice to follow the main plot and multiple sub-plots if he (or she) wishes, or they can just do what the hell they want. Fly anywhere in the galaxy, talk to whoever they want, or just concentrate on building up their ship. It's totally up to them. There is no pressure for them to stick to anything linear.”

But isn't there pressure on you to use the big names you've got as much as possible, otherwise there's the danger that the player will miss large chunks, isn't there?

“Yeah, I suppose so, if they just hang around in space doing nothing. But just by going through the motions of playing the game, they will interact with characters, be given clues and leads, which they can choose to follow or ignore. It'll never be just a case of doing nothing. You've got to remember that the plot dictates that to a certain extent, you are being hunted, and you'll have to take *some* kind of action if you are to survive.”

So the pressure's on, then?

“In a way, but what we've tried to do is make it as user-friendly as possible, with simple, but attractive interfaces and a “keep it coming” kind of scenario to keep the player involved.”



(Above left) A zillion Silicon Graphics workstations took five years to render each intricate sci-fi backdrop.*

(Above) John Hurt, pre-makeup.*

Something for everyone

So who exactly is the target audience, I wonder?

“Well, hopefully there'll be something in it for everybody at every level; novice or die-hard gamer/player.”

By getting some big names involved with the project, we've made a conscious effort to attract the passive gamer who has maybe only played the odd adventure or combat sim. At the same time, we've tried to make the whole thing as rich and diverse as possible, so it will appeal to anyone who has played and enjoyed games like *Elite*, *TIE Fighter* and of course, the *Wing Commander* games.”

Adam beams enthusiastically when I ask him if there's anything else he'd like to add.

“Well, at the end of the day it's a game, so it must be fun. We think it's a lot of fun.”

Rest assured dear readers, from what we've seen so far, *The Darkening* looks like it'll be more than that. It'll be fab, with a capital “F”. **Z**

(Left and right) Fact: *The Darkening's* set designer was the original “a washing-up bottle and two staples” Blue Peter special FX guy (1975-1979).*

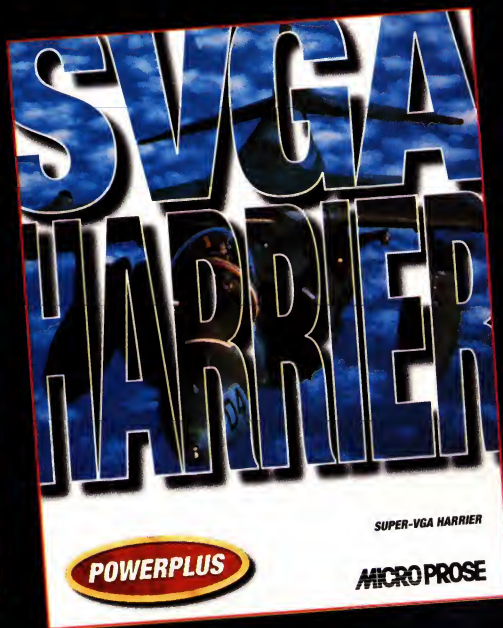


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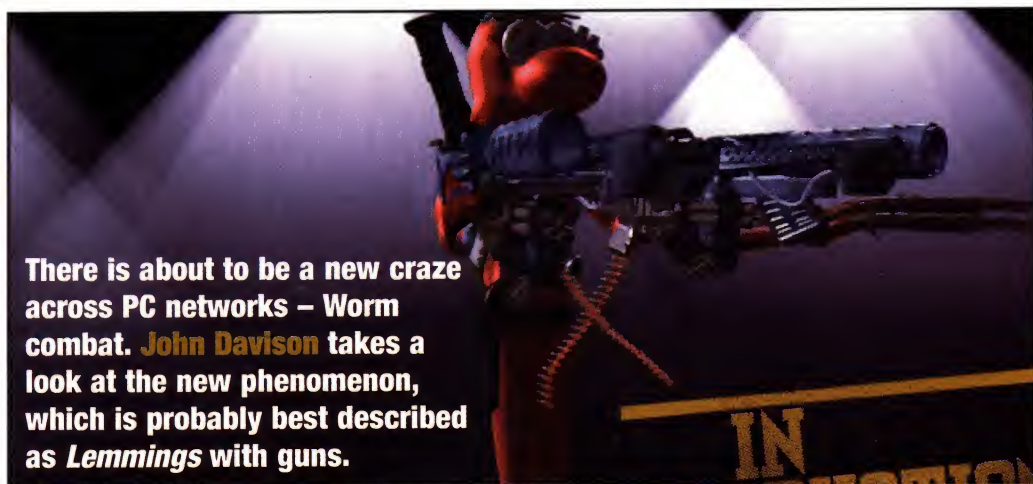
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There is about to be a new craze across PC networks – Worm combat. John Davison takes a look at the new phenomenon, which is probably best described as *Lemmings* with guns.

IN PRODUCTION

Worms

TEAM 17 HAS BEEN REMARKABLY quiet on the PC for the past year. Although gradually getting up to speed by releasing the bulk of its remarkable Amiga back-catalog stuff, it hasn't really made an impression... yet. *Worms* is the first product set for release under the new partnership between the Team and Ocean, and it looks set to be the game that really establishes the firm in the PC market.

So what's *Worms* all about then? Well, to look at it you'd be forgiven for thinking it was related to *Lemmings*. Just take a peek at the screen shots – looks a tad familiar, doesn't it? But this is where the similarity ends. The basic idea in this game is to take your crack team of ninja worms and kill everybody else.

Worms isn't really a game intended to be enjoyed alone; you're going to need to have at least one friend if you're going to get any enjoyment out of it. And for maximum pleasure you would need three, but obviously you might have to stoop to bribery to get that many.

The game itself is, basically, a turn-based combat thing. No, no, hang on a minute, don't run away 'coz it sounds

like a strategy game, just bear with me. Each player takes it in turn to control one of his worms for a set period of time. During that time he can move the worm around and then either choose to target another worm, or perform any one of a number of different tasks.

The number of options you have when making your move is quite enormous. There are countless weapons, including shotguns, homing missiles, mini-guns, cluster bombs, grenades, fireballs, dragon punches and, er, sheep... (don't ask, it'll be a big surprise for when you play the thing). But as well as all that, there are various defensive options, including tunnelling, building bridges and digging holes.

The objective is to be the last player with worms that are still alive.

How hard is your worm?

In a time when games are becoming more and more complex, it's refreshing to see one that is simple and effective. *Worms* is one of those games that relies purely on the quality of the gameplay to ensure it remains incredibly addictive. And if you couple the compelling

Worm Attachment

One of the features of the game is the ability to name individual worms in your team. We'd just like to warn you now, before the game comes out, that this is very dangerous indeed. Having both played the game and witnessed many others doing the same, it has become quite apparent that people grow incredibly attached to individual worms and take it deeply personally when one of them is killed. Worm destruction can lead to good friends becoming mortal enemies and irrational vendettas being started between otherwise well balanced people. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!



Product details

Developer: Team 17

Publisher: Ocean

Telephone: 0161 832 6633

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: August

nature of the game with the fact that *Worms* is almost completely open as far as customisation is concerned, then it looks like we're going to have a game that will remain popular for some time.

All of the levels in the game are generated randomly each time you play, but if you want to you can load in a graphics file from an art package, such as *Deluxe Paint*, and use that instead. On top of this, all of the sampled sounds in the game can be replaced with wav files, so you can have fun being awfully witty and amusing with weird farty and farmyard noises, should you so desire.

Hopefully, we'll be able bring you a review and a demo of the game in the next month or so. Watch this space. **Z**

(Top) Team 17 has included a variety of rather amusing, rendered cartoon sequences to fill in the gaps between levels.

(Right) Although *Worms* does look a bit like *Lemmings*, the gameplay is nothing like it. This is a case of kill or be killed.



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HIT THE

SAVING

It's so real on the PC
at the moment.
John Davison takes a good, hard look at another
one of those
"eagerly awaited" things...

14

Formula One Grand Prix



Product details

Developer: Geoff Crammond

Publisher: MicroProse

Telephone: 01454 326532

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: September

right, a couple of years ago) the power of everyone's PC's was considerably lower: a 386 with 4MB and 50MB hard drive was considered *de rigueur*. These days, though, if you haven't got a ninja Pentium with loads of memory and all the trimmings, you're considered to be a bit of a jessie.

So, here we have the sequel to *Formula One Grand Prix* (F1GP). No prattling about with the title, nothing fancy – just bung a dirty, great, big number two after it

(Above left) It's really quite hard to tell which of the screen shots are pre-rendered 3D Studio things and which ones are in-game. Spooky.

(Above right) Check out the hazing effect in the background. Nifty or what?

(Below) Unlike the original game, *F1GP2* has the full FIA licence.

Tech Alert

As you would expect, all these fancy features and clever graphics take a bit of a strain on the old processor, so it will come as absolutely no surprise to find that the minimum spec is likely to be a DX2/66 with 8Mb. What might become a burden, though, is the fact that, just like *EF2000*, *F1GP2* is one of the first products that supports the new GLINT 3D graphics standard. This gives the gamesplayer two advantages. Firstly – people with 486DX/33 and lower spec machines will be able to run the game at a reasonable frame rate in VGA. And secondly – people with ninja-bastard PCs will probably explode because the thing will look so damn good on their machines.

“Accurate track representations; loads of different views; all kinds of driving aids, such as auto-braking and gears; and damn fine gameplay... it's all there.”

Formula One Grand Prix. Both games are getting on a bit now, but they are such classics that it would be utterly ludicrous for new definitive versions *not* to be released. Back in the old days when these games were brought out (oh all

just so everyone notices. All the clever stuff happens in the game and, from what we've seen of the game so far, this should continue *F1GP's* reign as the definitive racing game.

Underneath it all, it's basically the

same game as the original. Why mess about with something that was virtually perfect anyway? Accurate track representations; loads of different views; all kinds of driving aids, such as auto-braking and gears, in case you can't handle all of the controls (and let's face it, not many people can); and damn fine gameplay... it's all still there. No, the differences in *F1GP2* fall into two distinct categories: the presentation and the artificial intelligence.

The pretty bit

As you can see from the screen shots, it is more than obvious that the graphics have been improved beyond belief. If anything, the in-game images are actually more impressive than any naff 3D Studio or SG rendered introduction sequence. Just look at 'em... they're absolutely gorgeous!

The polygon count for *F1GP2* is exponentially greater than the original, and to top it off, everything is texture-mapped with all the correct stickers



(Right) The cars are DEAD impressive looking. The wheels move – even the driver moves!

(Below) Check it out. SVGA-tastic!



Multi-Player

Yet again the multi-player aspect rears its head as half the PC owning population make stropky noises and say things like “but I haven’t got access to a bloody network”. Fear not, though, there are a number of things about to happen that will make multi-player gaming more accessible to everyone. Systems like DWANGO (which we’ll be bringing you a feature on soon), coupled with the fact that, gasp, BT is finally going to cave in and give everyone free local calls, mean that if you’ve got a modem, you’ll be able to play against lots of other people.

As we go to press, *FIGP2* features an eight-player networking option, which allows players to choose what team they drive for and what car they use. And just to prove how clever the whole thing is, each player on the network has a different cockpit layout and car performance model, depending on how they have set their car up.

As for future enhancements, there are two possible developments that seem likely (although totally unconfirmed). The first is that every car in the race could be driven by a human player. The second would mean that the game could be interfaced in some way with Micro-Prose’s forthcoming *Formula One Grand Prix Manager* product.



“and livery. Unlike the original game, this has the official FIA license, so all the right sponsors, names and imagery can be used throughout.

The most striking thing when you see the game in action is the quality of the cars. They really are quite stunning. The wheels move, the

suspension bounces, and even the driver’s head leans into each of the turns. To top it all off, you also get a fantastic “sun glint” reflection that gives the cars a shiny, solid look.

Aside from the cars, though, the stuff at the side of the track has also been enhanced enormously. The original game was pretty hard to beat for track-side clobber, and it took a very large dump from an enormous height on all other F1 games by having included all the proper buildings and accoutrements (boats in the harbour at Monaco etc.). Unfortunately, they were a bit, well, plain. But not this time. *FIGP2* features considerably more attention to detail and is absolutely texture-map-tastic throughout, with lots of things moving around and looking, er, racing track-like. What makes the thing really “nice” (eugh! horrid word) to look at (and this bit should probably come into the

“Clever Bit” section below) is the hazing effect that is employed on distant objects. As you race around the tracks you’ll actually notice that things in the distance are ever so slightly out of focus.

If you’re imagining all of that quite nicely and thinking “ooh, I’d better save up for that Pentium”, think about this as well: 25 frames per second in SVGA on a decent PC. That’s a TV-quality frame rate in hi-res. God only knows how the thing will run in bog-standard VGA mode, but 50fps doesn’t seem an unreasonable estimate.

The clever bit

The other important bit is the way the gameplay as a whole behaves. Although *FIGP* played very nicely, the cars did





have a tendency to behave a bit like, well er, computer-controlled cars. If you got the hang of it, you could out-fox virtually all the other drivers by simply knowing the tracks really well.

F1GP2 changes this by introducing an advanced artificial intelligence system for each of the drivers, which makes each one behave differently. Just like the real thing, strategy is very important and, while you may think that you're very clever using certain tactics to win each race, you'll soon find that your PC also thinks that it's a bit crafty as well.

Quite whether the drivers' tactics have been based on real drivers or not is unclear (your PC behaves like Damon Hill, where it looks as though it's going to win right until the last lap and then does something stupid that takes both him and some smug German out of the race), but it would seem likely that certain characteristics will be brought into the game.

Who knows, you might even get a bit of artificial intelligence that will come up with the seemingly impossible concept of Johnny Herbert actually winning the British Grand Prix. And, as you know, that sort of thing could never happen in real life. **Z**

(Above) Some of the graphics are likely to change in the final game – things such as the texture maps for the road and track-side objects will probably change... but basically this is how it looks in SVGA.

(Below) Another rather splendid "car going around a corner very fast" screen shot..



QUESTION TIME WITH... GEOFF CRAMMOND

Geoff Crammond... the bloke responsible for putting this little beauty together. What a fella, eh? And he's from good ol' Blighty. Although working exceptionally hard in order to finish the game on time, he took a bit of time out to tell us all about the game, the competition and what might be coming next.

Why the huge, long wait between *Formula One Grand Prix (F1GP)* and *Formula One Grand Prix (F1GP2)*? Did development for the sequel start straight away?

The *F1GP* moderm version was finished in March '93, therefore I have been working on *F1GP2* for two years.

What was the most complex aspect of development: The new graphics engine or the artificial intelligence system?

The level of complexity within all areas of development has been considerable. The 3D engine has almost totally been re-written to fully exploit the power of current hardware. Faster PCs have enabled me to expand the system in ways that would have been impractical even three years ago. The challenge with *F1GP2* has been to maintain the fluidity of the original game whilst displaying all of the enhanced graphics through the new graphics engine. There have been significant improvements made to all aspects of the original product as well as a number of interesting new game features.

Why such a small team working on the game? Were you not tempted to bring in troops of artists and coders and just become a big producer-type bloke wielding a huge stick?

F1GP2 has been such a big product. I have programmed the 3D simulator; Pete Cooke has programmed the menu system; Norman Surplus has been building all of the tracks; whilst David Surplus has been testing the simulator and the performance of each of the tracks. My team has also been working very closely indeed with the Producer of the product, Steve Hand, as well as various artists and audio staff at MicroProse. I've been responsible mainly

for the core of the game, but everybody involved has worked really hard to make this a great title.

Are the AI drivers based on any particular F1 drivers? Did you work with drivers/teams on any aspects of the game? Both MicroProse and myself have had contact with Formula One teams, and they have all been a tremendous help in ensuring that the game is as accurate as possible.

What project are you working on next? Are you allowed to talk about it?

As soon as *F1GP2* is completed I'm going to keep my options open. Obviously the GP2 engine is something that we're very proud of and I'm keen to use it in further products. A new version of *Stunt Car Racer*, that uses the *F1GP2* graphics engine would be something I'd be very eager to do.

How do you rate *IndyCar Racing*, and do you feel that *IndyCar 2* is a threat?

If I hear of something, I try to find out about it, but I tend not to look that closely at other projects. I want to feel free to do what I want, and not to be too influenced by other titles. In a way, the less I know about the others, the better. Our focus has always been on trying to model the reality of Formula One racing rather than to compete with other software. Regarding *IndyCar*, I took time out to look at the product and I thought they had done a remarkably good job. I think that the guys at Papyrus are similar to myself and my team in that they are very interested in their subject matter and also strive for quality in their products.

Are you likely to ever produce a game that doesn't involve driving something? What about this follow-up to *Sentinel* that everyone thinks you might be doing?

At present I am happy to continue working on racing games. There is always more to do with Formula One racing, but it should be possible to use the new engine to upgrade other products.



Looking Back

Yet again we have a quick ponder over the games we've seen in recent months and try to work out if they really are as good as we thought they were... or worse, in fact.

HI-Octano

Bullfrog, Electronic Arts
Reviewed: Issue 29

We only reviewed it a month ago... yes, yes, we know. And we're not saying that the review was wrong in any way. We just thought it was worth pointing out that just over a month after we got hold of the thing – no one is playing it at all. This is fairly unusual for a Bullfrog product, to be honest. There was a brief foray into link-up play, but even then it was still replaced with a *Doom* Death-match (quel surprise).

FX Fighter

Argonaut, GTE/Philips
Reviewed: Issue 29

Another one that was only reviewed last month, but we have to mention it again. If a game can get a bunch of grouchy editorial, art and production staff through a deadline, which involves redesigning the entire magazine and staying until after 2am most nights – sometimes when all of the coffee has run out – then I reckon it deserves a special award. It may not be quite up to the quality of games like *Tekken* on the PlayStation in the visuals department, but this is one bloody playable game. Bung a couple of joypads into your PC, learn a few of the special moves and then take immense satisfaction from beating the crap out of your opponent. What a splendid game. Jake rules, by the way... he is the hardest PC game character in existence, and anyone who says otherwise is more than welcome to challenge us.

Star Trek: The Next Generation: A Final Unity

MicroProse, Spectrum Holobyte
Reviewed: Issue 27

We went absolutely ga-ga over this when we brought you an exclusive review a few months ago, but it's well worth mentioning again. It's good, bloody good, in fact. Adventure games tend not to be that big these days (just look at *Full Throttle*), but *STNG* is absolutely huge. Macca went mad over the thing when he reviewed it, but now that the normal people on *PC Zone* have had a chance to play it, we're all in agreement that even though there have been loads of good products in '95 so far, this is one of the best. We're informed that more than 100,000 units have been shipped to date, so it seems that lots of other people like it, too. If you're not into *Star Trek*, don't be put off. This is an exceptionally playable game. Watch out for our monster Trueplayer guide next month.



Original Star Trek image™, © and © 1995 Paramount Pictures.

Cool Games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff...

Star Trek: TNG

FX Fighters

Doom

Championship Manager

X-Com

Crap Games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying "please steal me" and you still can't get rid of the bloody things...

Action Soccer

Silverload

Orion Conspiracy

Picture Perfect Golf

Daedalus Encounter

Reviews Section



THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM

90+ CLASSIC

Drop-dead brilliant, fab, skill, top, cool, excellent, almost as good as sex... etc., etc. Virtually flawless in all departments and oozing, yes oozing playability.

80-89 RECOMMENDED

Rather jolly super, but just not quite up to it in the sexual conquest stakes. More like a good snog really. One of those experiences that's more than adequate all round.

70-79

A good idea that's been reasonably well implemented, but not awfully original. A bit like someone coming up to you and saying "do you come here often?" The sort of game you'd go for if you were pissed... or a bit desperate.

60-69

Just above average, but absolutely nothing to write home and tell mum about. Adequate presentation, mediocre

gameplay and failing to make the grade in the originality stakes.

50-59

Averagely average Mr McAverage. Any game getting a score around this mark has absolutely nothing special about it whatsoever and will probably be forgotten almost immediately.

40-49

A just about bearable game which notches up a number of crippling flaws. The presentation ain't hot and the gameplay's worse.

20-39

Naff, and definitely worth avoiding at all costs.

20 and below PANTS

Absolute, complete and utter crap. It doesn't get much worse than this and therefore deserves the ultimate accolade... the PC Zone big, blue pants award for extreme naffness.

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Duncan MacDonald's £200 car does 0 to 40 in 15 seconds, and goes on to a top speed of 56mph. This did not make him the ideal person to review *Terminal Velocity*.



Terminal Velocity

FIND THAT GAMES TEND TO FALL INTO two categories: a) those that are very hard to explain; and b) those that are very easy to explain. *Terminal Velocity* falls rather heavily into the second group. So let's go... let's beat this baby in a paragraph!

- 1) You're in a spaceshippy/aeroplane-type thing.
- 2) You're in a *Magic Carpet*-style landscape, or a series of them, if we're talking about the entire game rather than just one level.
- 3) There's a big user-friendly radar doofer...
- 4) ...with loads of different "blips" on it - some of them are ground targets, some are air targets.
- 5) Kill everything, but preferably in a certain order.
- 6) Soon discover that there are underground tunnel networks.

- 7) Fly inside these.
- 8) Kill everything in there, too, while trying to avoid the walls.
- 9) Eventually emerge back on the planet's surface.
- 10) Locate the "jump-out" point.
- 11) Go to next, harder level.

And that's about it. Oh, hang on, I forgot something. Damn! That means I'm going to have to go back and change all the numbers. (Sudden brainwave). No! I know what I'll do. Squeeze this next bit in yourself, mentally, between points 5 and 6.

5A) When you blow certain things up, a power-up item is revealed.

5B) Pick it up to increase speed capabilities, weapon type and strength - that sort of thing.

5C) And you'll need the power-ups, because there are some pretty tough end-of-level bosses to contend with.

There. Now you're 100 per cent up to speed. And, er, I'm 100 per cent out of things to say. Time for an advert break, while I try to think of a way to extend the review...

End of part one

Advert one

[Scene: Quaint country village, full of inbred farmers and old-fashioned tractors. Man gets out of car to ask local for directions.]

Man: Excuse me, could you tell me the way to...

Yokel: You the noo vet, are you?

Vet: Uh? Blimey. Yes, that's right. How did you...

Yokel: What koind of coffee you drink?

Vet: What?

Yokel: Oi said what koind of coffee you drink? You deaf boy?

Vet: Er, Nescafé. Why do you ask?

(Right) The tunnels aren't quite as complicated as the ones in *Descent*, but they can get seriously trippy.





Yokel: Folk round these parts don't take too koinldy to people what don't drink Nescafé. You can prove that you drink it, can you?

Vet: Prove it? Prove what?

Yokel: You can prove to me that you drink Nescafé, can you?

Vet: [Taking jar of coffee from shopping bag.] Well, yes, look. This is mine. Nescafé. I love it. Can't get enough of the stuff. Those dark brown dissolvable mini-nuggets of joy. Mmmm!

Yokel: Yes, well, Oi suggest that over the next few adverts in this series you make sure you carry that there jar of Nescafé with you wherever you go, boy. You may need to prove to others what you just proved to me.

Vet: Thanks for the advice. It won't leave my side.

Advert two

[Vet is in village grocery store, asking directions again.]

Vet: Hello, I'm the...

Shopkeeper: You're the noo vet, Oi'd say. And you'd be wanting to know how to get to Mrs Mopp's thatched cottage, won't you?

Vet: It's uncanny! You country folk seem

to be mind readers.

Shopkeeper: Oi don't know about that, but Oi do know that Oi'll be needing to see your security pass before Oi can divulge the information you'd be after.

Vet: Security pass?

Shopkeeper: That's roight! I want your security pass.

Vet: Oh, yes, of course. Hang on. [He gropes in his bag and pulls out the jar of Nescafé.] Does this aroma-bomb give me Alpha Clearance?

Shopkeeper: It'll do you, boy, it'll do you just foine. Mrs Mopp lives next door.

[Vet leaves shop, enters Mrs Mopp's house, and sits down in the kitchen.]

Vet: I'll get straight to the point, Mrs Mopp. I was wondering if you'd...

Mrs Mopp: You was wondering if Oi'd be your "woman who does", if Oi'm not much mistaken.

Vet: Er, yes. That's exactly right. Superb ESP!

Mrs Mopp: Oi'll be wanting to know what you've got in that there grocery bag first, though. Oi need visual confirmation!

Vet: [He shows her the jar of Nescafé.]

Mrs Mopp: [Impressed.] You'll be wanting my "extra services", will you? Oi may be

(Left) The quality of the texture maps is actually very good throughout, and they're even better on the CD version of the game.

old and haggard, but Oi know how to please a young gent like yourself.

Vet: Uh? Oh, er, no, that won't be necessary. Just the cleaning and washing and ironing.

Mrs Mopp: You sure? Oi knows a few "tricks".

Vet: No, let's leave that stuff to the couple in the *Gold Blend* ads, shall we.

Mrs Mopp: Very well. Your loss. Oi'll put the kettle on then, shall I?

Vet: An excellent idea Mrs Mopp! An excellent idea!

Part two

Oh, shit. You're back already. And I still haven't thought of much else to say. Bugger. Er... oh well, seeing as how I'm on the spot, I suppose the rather tired sentence, "*Terminal Velocity* looks pretty good" wouldn't be out of order. It's almost up there, visually, with the likes of *Magic Carpet*, with a bit of *Descent* thrown in for good measure. What's more is that it moves like jiggery (on a p90, that is, but it's fully toggleable for goodish results on a 486), and the explosions and sense of speed are superb. But... but... but...

But...

But at the end of the day it's all a bit, er, how can I say this without sounding like some yawny old crusty who only likes hex-based war games and suchlike? Oh God, I'll just say it anyway. *Terminal Velocity*, when you get down to the nitty gritty, is just another shoot 'em up. There. I've said it. *Terminal Velocity* is yet another simplistic shoot 'em up, tarted up in flashy clothes.

The problem I've had with getting to this point is that over recent weeks, from all quarters, I've heard (and read) people raving about the bloody thing. I believed the hype, as one does, and was expecting to relive that "first time I played *Doom*" feeling. You know? (And

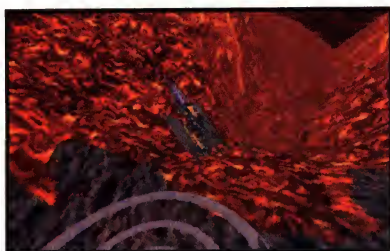


(Above) The objects are all extremely well constructed and particularly well animated.

(Left) The graphics really are some of the best in this type of game.



(Right) At the end of each level all you have to do is get to this funny springy thing and whizz off to the next stage.



Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb (8Mb recommended)

Processor: 386 33MHz or higher

Hard Disk Space: 20Mb

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard or joystick

please believe me when I say I like fast-paced action games... because I do. The only thing more enjoyable than whizzing around, spraying death at anything that moves, in my book, is sitting down in front of the telly with a cup of tea for a half hour's *Ready Steady Cook* with Fern Britton).

So, anyway, I was expecting great things of *Terminal Velocity*, but all I ended up with, after about 20 minutes of play, was a feeling of, "Hmmm, quite good fun, but I'm not exactly hooked on it." The lack of any real "tension" was the problem, I deduced. But I decided to persevere a bit longer. However, things didn't really get much better. Then Warren from *CD ROM Magazine* suddenly appeared and began to watch over my shoulder. So I asked if he'd played it, and, if so, what did he reckon?

"It didn't really grab me," he said. He added that the CD version was better than the floppy version, with more levels and extra graphics, but even so, it still didn't quite cut the mustard in the addictiveness stakes.

Reassured now, I quit to DOS.

(Right) In places some of the terrain is actually more impressive than that found in *Magic Carpet*, but it does tend to vary quite wildly from level to level.



Multi-player

An important point, for those with networking capabilities, is that *Terminal Velocity* can be turned into a multi-player extravaganza (as is now the norm, so I won't make a major deal out of it). At the time of writing I haven't tried the multi-play option out, but I should imagine it'd be quite a hoôt, what with eight people and so forth. No *Doom* beater, but a merry caper nevertheless.

Sudden turnaround

Okay, we're at the final summing up point. And if you've already taken in the final score (as you no doubt will have), you'll have noticed that *Terminal Velocity* gets 80. You may be slightly confused by this relatively high mark, considering the dismissive tones I've been broadcasting up until now, so I'd better start qualifying rather than quantifying.

Okay then...

As a '95 style shoot 'em up, *Terminal Velocity* is perfectly enjoyable (in just the same way as the horizontally scrolling *R-Type III* was, back in the middle ages).

But so what? We've seen it all before. And in six weeks time we'll no doubt see it again, in a game called "Space Monsters Attack Mars". And in nine weeks time someone else will do it once more, in a game called something naff like "Adrenaline Strike", which will possibly make the proud claim: "25 per cent more texture mapping". Bullfrog has already done it with *Hi Octane*. And on and on and on.

In other words I'm not saying you won't have a bit of mindless fun with *Terminal Velocity*, but don't expect it to amaze you particularly. Think of it as a very temporary diversion rather than a way of life. **Z**



Score

80

A very good 3D engine, wearing a pair of rather unoriginal and unaddictive "gameplay trousers".

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: US Gold **Tel:** 0121 606 1800



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Across the Rhine

Duncan MacDonald adopts a new approach to games reviewing: Writing the same review, twice... but on the same three pages. He's clever like that.



1944: ACROSS THE RHINE IS SUCH A complex game that it sort of needs two simultaneous reviews; one for the propellor heads, and one for the thick brigade. And guess what? That's exactly what I've done. Pick your own route to the end, dependent on your IQ (or whatever else you want to call it)...

Section One

(The Propellor Head Version)

Marvellous! A 1,000,000-page manual. That's the ticket. And it's brilliantly complicated, too. It tells you everything you need to know in such a way that you have to read it about ten or eleven times. It took me nine days, and that was speed-reading. Take it at a trot and you could possibly extend this to two weeks. Absolutely superb. Top hole. There's some fascinating historical insight, too... not that we didn't know any of this stuff before, of course, being historians and so forth, but it's a delight to go over it all again.

(The Thick Brigade Version)

Bloody hell! The manual for *Across the Rhine* makes the *Tornado* tome look like a *Janet and John* book. There is a "quick-start" page, admittedly, but that's exactly what it is... a page. It tells you nothing, basically, so you either have to experiment in-game or read the whole million pages from start to finish. Experimentation won't get you very far, so before long it's back to the manual for a four-year "toilet session". Mind



you, there's some interesting historical stuff included. Did you know that tanks were made of metal? And that they had more than one pilot inside them?

Section Two

(The Propellor Head Version)

I suspected it from the manual, but when I finally booted the game I was still slightly alarmed to notice the complete absence of hexes. I thought they would appear on one of the magnification levels at least, but no. Zoomed right in to Platoon Level or zoomed right out to Commander Level, they simply weren't there. I was also rather worried that the game took place in real time rather than being turn based. (I like a bit of time to think about these things, don't you?) Still, every cloud has a silver lining, and in the case of *Across the Rhine*, it's the installation options. Small install takes up seven megabytes on the hard drive, and so the

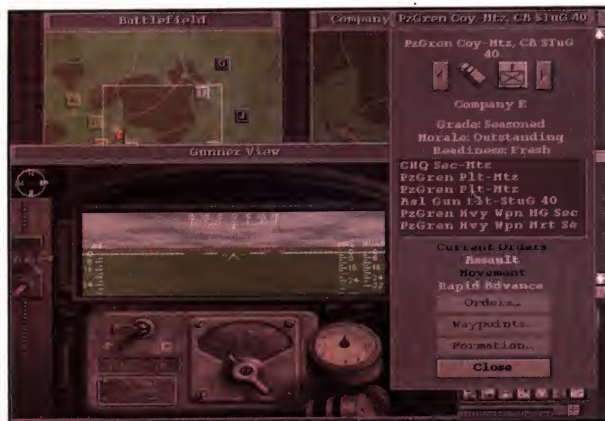
game does most of its in-game accessing straight from the CD. It's a gloriously fastidious process, too. If I needed some time to plan (or make myself a nice cuppa), I discovered, I could simply click on another unit, or call up another viewpoint, and be awarded about ten minutes free "strategy time".

(The Thick Brigade Version)

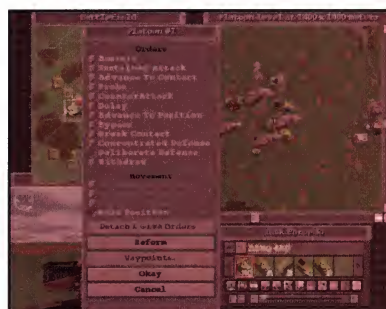
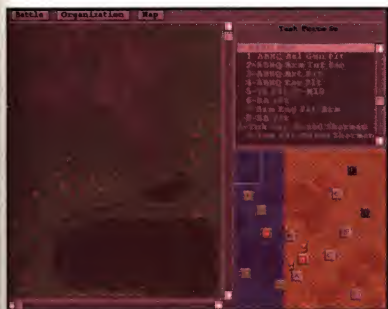
Across the Rhine has a "small" installation option, which is an absolute nightmare. Want to change from the top-of-the-tank 3D view to inside the gunner's department? Got a spare couple of days? No, if you want this game to hit you with anything approaching playable levels of accessing delays, then you have no choice than to go for the "big" install option. And take a guess at how many spare hard drive megabytes you're going to need for that? 25? 40? 50??? Afraid not, chum. We're talking over 90 megabytes to free up here. I had to delete *Nascar Racing!* Bastards!

(Right) The window system is quite complicated and confusing at first, taking a fair bit of getting used to.

(Far right) It's a strategy game, but there's not a hex in sight.



Rhyme



(Left) There seem to be more windows knocking around than there are at Crystal Palace. Confusing isn't the word.

Section Three

(The Propellor Head Version)

I found the movable windows approach quite refreshing. A main overview map, a three-scale troop planning map, and a command box... all on screen together. Super! It's so easy to move between units, sub-units and sub-sub units. But there was always one window that perturbed me, however, and that was the 3D view. Yes, "3D". Just like one of those appalling arcade games. From this window you could actually "enter" a certain tank, and perform all the actions under manual control: driving, aiming, firing. It really scared me, frankly. It was excess baggage. But I soon realised that you could minimise this window with the click of a button. A bally relief, I can tell you. Back to the maps, old chap, which is where it happens, as you know!

(The Thick Brigade Version)

I haven't got a clue what I'm doing! All those bloody icons! It's just so over complicated, or at least I think it is. And I'm not too impressed with the windows system, either. You can move them about, sure, but you can't drop them off the bottom of the screen and just leave a title bar showing, ready to drag back up again when you're ready for it. There

was one window that appealed at first, though, and that was the 3D window. First-person perspective. Drive the tank yourself. And I did, I did, I did. But I got killed after nine biftoseconds. You can't see what the toss is going on. You need the maps. But I'm scared of the maps. Jesus Christ, I hate tank games. Anyone want a game of *Micro Machines*?

Section Four

(A Brief Discourse Between The Thickies And The Propellers)

Thicky: This game's shit! When you take manual control of your tank, you can't see anything. Your targets are so far away they're just pixels, but they can see you perfectly. You get killed almost immediately.

Propellor: Try tuning into the larger picture. You're recreating some of the most famous tank battles in history here. You don't just meander around in a single vehicle, hoping for a lucky shot. Thicky: Eh?

Propellor: The maps, my retarded friend. Take control of the whole shooting match, take some responsibility. Split units up, send some here, some there, give them some superbly thought-out waypoints and some intelligent orders. You can even call in artillery barrages



and bomber passes. Montgomery didn't didn't win North Africa by sitting inside one of his tanks saying "this game's shit", did he?

Thicky: Who's Mount Gommery?

Propellor: (Sigh.) Did you try clicking on any of the abundant icons?

Thicky: Yes, but I couldn't work out what they did. And every time I did click on one, my men screamed "Taking heavy losses, Captain," and awful things like that.

Propellor: (Double sigh.) Did you ever play *Dune 2*?

Thicky: Yeah, it was excellent!

Propellor: Then bear in mind that *Across the Rhine* is similar in concept, just more complex.

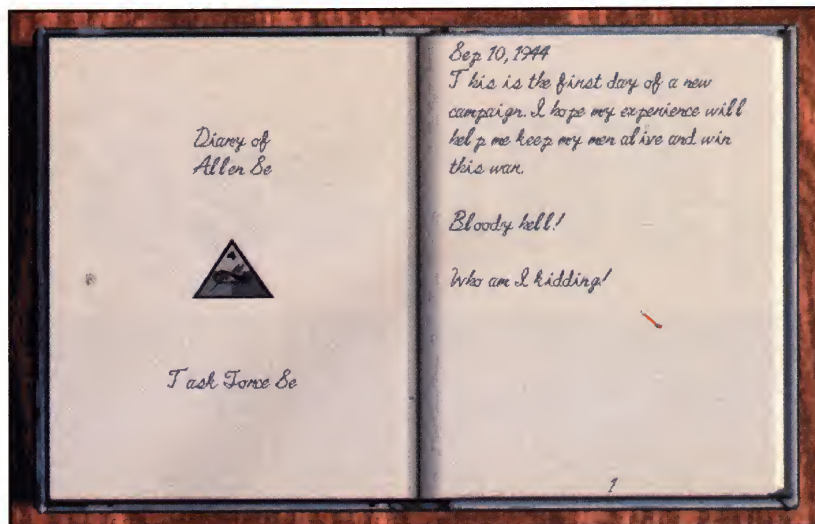
Thicky: Really?

Propellor: Yes, really. I'll show you how



(Left) As you'd expect, there are loads of pretty pictures between all of the action... quite why we need a typewriter is a little unclear, though.

(Right) Just like any good war hero, you get to write a diary as you progress through the action.



“ to work the icons, shall I? Thick: Oh, alright then. (The lesson eventually ends. Back to the review...)”

Section Five (The Propellor Head Version)

The single battles were marvellous (particularly the Battle of the Bulge), but now that I'm in the Campaign section I simply can't explain the depths to which my joy runs. Play begins with the allied landings in Normandy (in June 1944) and continues to the end of the war. You command all the skirmishes as your battalion trundles *en-route* through Europe... and at the end of each, the computer tells you whether or not you fared as well as your true-life counterparts. Medals can be won. There's even an on-going diary into which you can type your feelings. My first entry said "The battle was won, but at great cost. I am in urgent need of replacements. This damn war, the waste of flowering youth." Pretty good, huh? ("What a prick" - A Reader).

(The Thick: Version)

I still don't really know what I'm doing, and this interface is completely user-unfriendly, but I'm having a bash at the

Campaign mode anyhow. And guess what? I've been at it for about four hours now, but I've somehow managed to drive what was left of the German attack force off the edge of the map. I've bloody well gone and won the first battle! Unbelievable. What's more, the computer's just said this: "You are doing slightly better than the historical 4th Armoured Division." Blimey. They must have been totally shit then, eh?

Section Six (The Propellor Head Version)

Paradise! A Battle Builder! I shall spend the rest of my life (once I've finished the campaign, that is) making battles to challenge my cerebral but inherently warlike colleagues. The time of day, weather conditions, terrain type - I can toggle everything! I shall reconstruct the Battle of Tehran down to the most anal of details!

(The Thick: Version)

This Battle Builder could have been a bit of a hoot. I wanted to make a really high mountain, put a German tank on top, then surround it with loads of allied tanks - down below. Then I could have just gunned it to death (and then I could have entered the first-person view

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb (8Mb for digital effects)

Processor: 486/33

Hard Disk Space: 20Mb minimum

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

in relative safety, and driven around my mountain, gloating). But you can't customize the terrain to that level. You just have a selection of generic terrains, and you choose one. Oh well, it's quite good I suppose.

Final Section

(The Propellor Version)

Across the Rhine is absolutely splendid. Once you get used to the lack of hexes and the real-time movement, you become so deeply engrossed that you forget to breathe. (I passed out on several occasions). The 3D window I eventually used simply as a "tv camera", and it certainly added atmosphere, I'm forced to admit. The individual battles and the splendid campaign should keep you engaged for at least a year - and then you can play the whole thing again, as a Sausage-Eater. Different tanks, different tactics. So that's two years. Then there's the Battle Builder. Infinite possibilities. New Year's Eve, 1999? I know what I'll be doing.

(The Thick: Version)

It's a bloody nightmare to get into, but I suppose once you come to terms with *Across the Rhine*'s overcomplicated interface and rather unfriendly display mode, it's actually not at all bad. It gets pretty engrossing, in fact. And it's certainly got a long play-life.

Personally speaking, though, I tend to prefer my war games dressed up in slightly more arcadey clothes... like *Command And Conquer*, for instance. But then, you have to remember I'm a thick git, so I would. Tooodle pip! **Z**

Score

86

Propellor: Ruddy marvellous. Super. A must buy!
Thick: Er, Sort of quite good really, I suppose

Price: £44.99 (RRP) **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: MicroProse **Tel:** 01454 326532



(Right) There are lots of nice digitised piccies throughout as well. The presentation of *Across the Rhine* is actually quite super - especially seeing as it's a strategy game.

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(Right and far right) The incredibly irritating Endodriod puzzle.



Space Quest 6: The Spinal

Roger Wilco is back. Resident space cadet Chris Anderson checks out Sierra's latest rib-tickler.

HMM, ANOTHER SPACE QUEST game. Those loveable bods at Sierra just don't give up, do they? I'm sure that even as I write this they're scratching their heads and wondering what they're going to do for "Space Quest 7". Undoubtedly squillions more games in the series will follow that. The obvious question to ask at this point is: who's playing them? I've got to be honest and say right here and now that the only people I can think of who will want to play *Space Quest 6* are the hard-core followers who've been following the series from the beginning. But I'm not sure that even they will have the patience to slog through another adventure in which Roger Wilco (the star of the show, i.e. you) solves loads more illogical puzzles, cracks naff jokes and basically has a pretty dull time.

Despite the fact I'm always suspicious of Sierra adventure sequels (with the exception of the excellent *Kings Quest* series), I went into this review with an open mind, but after just an hour of gameplay I was incredibly bored with the familiar slapstick comedy and crass character dialogue. If you've ever played *Space Quest 5* or *Leisure Suit Larry 6*, you'll pretty much know what to expect. If you haven't, here's the low-down...

All or nothing

I have several criticisms of the game, most of which you can live with, but

there's one which is unforgivable: the narrative for the game is, without any shadow of a doubt, the absolute worst I have ever heard in any CD adventure game. Look at something using the eye icon and the object in question will be described by some American tosspot with an unbelievably irritating voice. Everyone in the entire PC Zone office was cringing every time Mr Tossplot did his stuff. Thankfully, you can turn this idiot off. There is, however, a slight problem if you take this option; you lose the voice-overs for all the characters in the game, too. So, your brand-new CD talkie adventure goes out the window and you end up playing a mediocre adventure game of yesteryear. I really cannot

didn't think people would react as violently to Mr Tossplot's narrative as we did, or he/she simply forgot to include an option to take it out.

We are not amused

As far as the game itself is concerned, it's pretty much standard Sierra stuff...

Roger, having been promoted to captain in the last game, has once again been demoted to janitor. There is a long intro, which makes much of Rogers demotion ceremony; he is not only stripped of his rank, but all his clothes, too. I'm sure all of the bods at Sierra must have been falling about with uncontrollable laughter as Roger's clothes started slowly disappearing, but

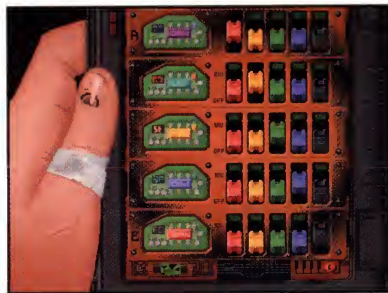
"Look at something using the eye icon and the object in question will be described by some American tosspot with an unbelievably irritating voice."

understand why Sierra didn't include an option to turn off the narrator speech. You could do it in *Gabriel Knight* (which is still, as far as I am concerned, Sierra's finest game to date) and *Kings Quest 7* (another Sierra game, which is infinitely better than this one), but whoever designed *Space Quest 6* either

the whole thing left me cold.

This is more or less par for the course as far as the whole game is concerned. However, it's not just the humour in the game (or, more correctly, lack of it) that finally put me off, it's a lot more simple than that - the actual gameplay is dull as hell...

(Right) Stooze Fighter 3: If you think it looks naff, you should try playing the thing!





Frontier



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486/25

Hard Disk Space: 5Mb

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major cards

Controls: Mouse, joystick

It's a real pain in the —

Roger starts the game on shore leave, on a planet where there are plenty of characters to meet (both human and alien), but they're all terminally boring and they all seem to think they're incredibly funny when, in fact, they most definitely are not. There are a couple of parts in this section of the game that could have been interesting if they hadn't been so badly implemented. For example, in the arcade, you have to beat one of the locals at a video game, side-splittingly entitled "Stooge Fighter 3". The problem is, Stooge Fighter 3 is just as crap as *Space Quest 6* is itself. To make matters worse, a lot of the puzzles in the game are illogical and laborious. At one stage of the game, you have to capture an android to make some money. This involves collecting several objects, manipulating them all in different ways, solving at least three sub-puzzles and running about from

one location to another before finally freezing the critter and collecting your reward. This took me ages to work out, and far from being challenging, is a monumental pain in the arse.

On the slightly plus side

The incredibly detailed svga graphics are excellent. This is by far the best looking *Space Quest* game to date. Of course, that in itself is no reason to give it a fairly reasonable score. The main reason I haven't mercilessly slated the game is because there are a hell of a lot of *Space Quest* fans out there who will love it simply because it is a *Space Quest* game. Let's face it, the criticisms I've made of the game are more or less true of most of the other games in the series, but that sure didn't stop anyone from buying them *en masse*, thus inspiring Sierra to continue the series, did it? So it stands to reason that they'll all like this one, too.

The message is simple: if you're a *Space Quest* fanatic, go ahead, rush out and buy it, I'm sure you'll have a wild time with it. If you're not, don't even think about going anywhere near it. **Z**

(Above) A space hero's work is never done.

A Brief History

The *Space Quest* series has certainly had its fair share of ups and downs. The first two games in the series were moderately entertaining, but by the time the third game came along, the novelty had worn off and the whole thing was starting to look a bit jaded. *Space Quest 4* brought the series back to life with all-new 256 colour VGA graphics, better sound and an improved interface. Before work on *Space Quest 5* began, disaster struck. The team responsible for writing the first four games (the guys from Andromeda) decided it didn't want to do it anymore. Sierra then made the fatal mistake of drafting in the Dynamics development team, whose hand-painted graphic style did not suit the feel of the *Space Quest* series and so the fifth game was an absolute disaster.

Scott Murphy, one of the game's original writers, is back for *Space Quest 6*, which is definitely an improvement over the fifth in the series, but somehow I just get the feeling that Scott's particular brand of bland American wit will be wearing a bit thin by now as far as adventure gamers are concerned.

Score

70

Trite adventure completely devoid of humour. *Space Quest* fans will love it!

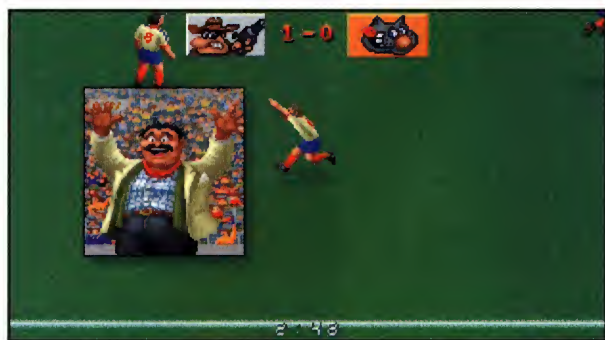
**Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now
Publisher: Sierra Tel: 01734 303322**



It's a game. It's from Ubisoft. And nobody wanted anything to do with it. So we gave it to a nobody:
Patrick McCarthy.



Action Soccer



(Above) Isn't that that bloke with the kebab shop that Harry Enfield used to do?

LET'S SEE NOW... (GETS OUT HIS COPY of the Reviewers' Book of Football Jokes.) Nope... used that. Used that. And used that, too. Shit. All three football game jokes have been thoroughly exhausted. Bring back the days of no football games, I say. At least we didn't have to review two or three of them every month. I'm stuck now. Hang on, I've just remembered it's a French game. (Consults well-thumbed office copy of the Big Book of French Game Jokes.) Aha. The French are pretty weird, aren't they? (Oh, no, not that one again. A Reader.) I suppose we'd better get on with it. Let's look at the latest (yawn) really interesting, technologically stunning pretender to the PC footballing game crown.

The (yawn) game options

Alright, what you get is all the usual stuff that you always get. They have different amusing names, depending on the game itself, but they're always the same: you should know the sort of thing by now: some kind of cup option, some kind of league option, and some kind of customisable tournament option. This one has all of those. And like all the others, it's v. poor.

(Below) The referee launches into one of a range of bubblegum tricks.

(Below right) The famous passing mode.



So what's crap about it?

Well, there's the passing. An arrow pops up beside your player as you run with the ball, flicking about as you make progress. You can only pass in the direction the arrow's pointing, which, needless to say, is extremely annoying, for not only does it almost always point backwards when you're in your own half, but it changes direction so frequently that you often don't pass where you want to even if you take notice of it. And if you hold the pass button for too long, you even get the ball back again, because the arrow points straight back to the first player. This is a truly great feature; the

"And then there's the AS (Artificial Stupidity). Players run away from the ball, despite your efforts to make them turn and make a tackle."

ability to only play one-tuos for ever is something we've always wanted in a game. What it means is you just use the punt button.

And then there's the AS (Artificial Stupidity). Players run away from the ball, despite your efforts to make them turn and make a tackle. There isn't even a "select the player nearest the ball" button to over-ride this. According to Ubisoft, the only way to activate the "select a player" thing is by letting go of all the buttons for a second or so. Now that's exactly what you want to do in the middle of a hectic game of football, and very helpful. Except it doesn't work even then - you actually have cases where the player nearest the ball stands

Tech specs

Memory: 13Mb

Processor: 486 sx

Hard Disk Space: 4Mb

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Mouse, gamepad and keyboard

stock-still, unselected while the one you're controlling runs about nearby.

It looks alright, though

Yes, it does. There are two views - side-on or isometric - and both look, as you

say, alright. However, the side-on view is slow and difficult to score in, and the isometric view is faster and easier to score. The difficulty level only seems to adjust the speed, so it can be used to achieve a balance depending on which viewing speed you prefer. But if you add all the above problems to the differently rated, identically-performing teams and the fact that the ball-carrier is always the slowest player on the pitch, why on earth would you bother?

Basically, Action Soccer is pretty dull. **Z**

Score

50

Nothing new (yawn), nothing interesting (big yawn), and what's more... (nods off).

Price: £34.99 Release Date: September
Publisher: Ubisoft Tel: 0181 941 4008



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Patrick McCarthy has often entertained us in the office with his "magic floating lump behind a sheet" act. Ahem.

Simon the Sorcerer 2



(Right) Runt attempts to compensate for his lack of stature by using a king-size executive "lava toilet".

YES, HE'S BACK. AND THIS TIME HE'S got a ponytail. Simon the not-so magical Sorcerer has returned in an all-new point-and-click adventure, the likes of which you'll... er, probably have seen before quite a few times, actually.

Sordid (the evil wizard who was vanquished in the first game with the aid of a judicious push into a pool of lava) has re-materialised from the middle of a spell book in a way that's not made entirely clear. All we know is that he did it with the help of Runt, a vertically-challenged, well, runt, who's always wanted to be a magician ever since he saw David Copperfield make an aero-

plane "disappear" on *Summertime Special* in '75. (The fact that Mr Copperfield had a hand-held SAM launcher behind his back was missed owing to lazy camera-work.) Runt's old man, being essentially a decent sort, is thoroughly against this sort of magical behaviour, and wants Runt to get a job as the leg of a stool, or any other of a number of Ronnie Corbett-type jokes about whatever it is short people do. Runt has his hopes set higher. Short people, by necessity, always have their sights set higher...

Short stories

So Runt becomes a fully paid up evil magician's apprentice, and sends a

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb

Processor: 386 DX

Hard Disk Space: 1Mb

Graphics: VGA

Sound: SoundBlaster compatibles

Controls: Mouse

wardrobe across the dimensions to Simon's house as a trap. Simon duly gets into the wardrobe and, rather like Hugh Grant, is sucked through the continuum. Except that Simon ends up outside a wise old man's house, instead of inside a police station. And, almost before he can insult the old man and his ugly granddaughter in his usual loveable style, he's up to his stupid hat in a quest for Mucusade, the energy-filled liquid-cum-wardrobe fuel.

Oooh, sorcery...

As you'll see from the screenshots, everything looks pretty much the same as it used to. Indeed, apart from one or two differences in approach, it is the same. The first game was entertaining enough. It had puzzles that, while they wouldn't really blow your mind with their difficulty, did require a bit of thought, and, most importantly, in a world chock-a-block with American examples, it had a very English sense of humour. The second game follows the pattern pretty closely; for example, there are references to Little and Large and quotes from Newman and Baddiel

(Right) Everything looks much the same as it used to...



Bernard Manning Alert

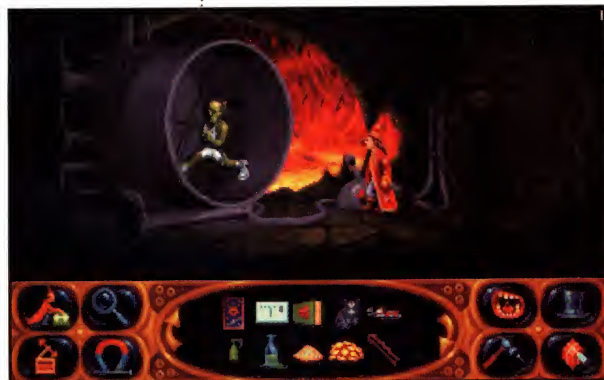
I know it probably isn't very "New Lad" to mention it, but there are one or two "jokes" in the game that left me feeling decidedly uneasy. For example, do we really need to have the black character called Um Bongo? And when he first appears, is it absolutely essential to give Simon the option of making an Immigration Office joke? And can't we have a money-lender who isn't Jewish? If I were black or Jewish I'd be extremely annoyed by these stereotypes.



sketches. It's just like being back in the sixth form.

The differences lie with the game's design. The original LucasArts-style control method (cf *Indiana Jones* and the rest) of structuring sentences to form commands has been replaced by verb icons. And the game takes place on a scrollable map, which allows you to visit several places in any order. The difficulty level is about the same, but the ability to move about, even if you're stuck, makes things just that bit more interesting for you.

Oh, and there's one other difference; Chris Barrie is no longer with us. Apparently, being a complete luvvie, he only wanted to do half a day's work a week in the voiceover booth (it does so drain one). And, since Adventure soft had four days' worth of script to get through, they told him to shove it.



(Top) Simon stumbles across the after-effects of a giant's hangover

(Above) Let's hope this git dies of a heart-attack.



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Stuck on a particular screen? Can't find the three interactive hot-spots that are right before your very eyes, you pea-brained dimwit? Or just in a hurry to get down the pub for a few jars and a kerb-crawl with lonely Hugh Grant, wealth

re-distributor extraordinaire? Don't worry. Help is at hand! Just press F10, and all the hot spots will be revealed to you! (Soupy voice: Spend time clicking around the screen for enjoyment's sake? Not me! I just F10 – and go!)



Score

84

Bigger and better, but a bit dated looking

Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Adventure Soft (UK)

Tel: 0121 352 0847

Magic

Considering he's supposed to be a dead powerful sorcerer, not much of the game is actually given over to performing magic, is it? All the puzzles are solved using decidedly unmagical methods; when called upon to reach somewhere high up, does he cast a quick hovering spell? Does he buggery. He collects helium balloons. Eat your heart out, Magic Circle.

Alright, so maybe, just maybe, the game would be over in roughly ten minutes if he cast spells to sort everything out all the time. But nonetheless, where's the izzy-wizzying? Where's the card-shuffling, wand-waving and rabbit swallowing? While the truly great magicians like Paul Daniels are making trombones disappear up Debbie McGhee's nose, or something, Simon is scarcely living up to his name. Your Zoaraway Zone says: He should be re-named "Simon the Over-Dressed and Ineffectual Twat", and be done with it.

The Map

One of *Simon the Sorcerer 2*'s new features is that it tries to get around the old adventure game problem of being stuck in one place because you can't work out what to do next. There's a scrolling map of the town and surrounding countryside, and many locations can be visited from the very start. This means that there are far more routes through the game than usual, and you can now move to several different locations and get stuck in all of them at once.



The Last Dynasty



Coktel Vision gets its game genres in a twist again. **Chris Anderson** ploughs through the end result.



(Left) The graphics in the adventure section are superb.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486/33

Hard Disk Space: 4Mb

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major cards

Controls: Mouse, joystick

Never ending story...

Without a doubt, the graphics are nothing less than absolutely stunning, and the interface for moving around and manipulating objects is a dream to use, and the story-line, while not as atmospheric as *Ween*, or as captivating as *Lost In Time*, is absorbing enough to hold your attention to the end of the adventure section.

The only problem is, if you want to get to the very end of the game itself, you'll have to plough through another long, boring combat section. I can't see anyone bothering with another few hours of irritating battle sections just to see a video scene with French actors in it telling us all how the story ended (the voiceovers are in English but obviously the French guys are speaking in French, so the end result is quite comical).

If you want to play a space combat game, buy one of the *Wing Commander* games. If you want to play an adventure game, buy one of the Coktel games I mentioned earlier or any of the recent LucasArts games. **Z**

Score

45

Good adventure game completely ruined by crap combat sections.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Sierra

Tel: 01734 303322

COKTEL VISION IS A VERY STRANGE development team indeed. This is the team that created *Ween* and *Lost In Time*; two visually astonishing and highly playable adventure games. Unfortunately, this is also the team that produced *Inca 1* and *2*, both of which had excellent adventure sections, but also had pathetic combat sections, which were graphically appalling and served only to ruin your enjoyment of the adventure parts.

Cut out the cut scenes!

The Last Dynasty sees an unwelcome return to the mixture of styles employed in the *Inca* games. The game is divided into three separate parts: two combat sections and one long adventure section. To get to the adventure, you must complete the first combat section. To give it its due, Coktel Vision has tried to make the combat parts more interesting this time round by introducing an

element of strategy into the battle sequences. You can call up a map that shows you all the units in the battle; you can give orders to allied ships and generally control the whole show. The problem is, the battle sequences are completely ruined by cut-sequences showing totally irrelevant and useless video clips which pop up every ten seconds or so and drive you mad. I've lost count of the times I was just about to press the fire button and send some poor sucker into oblivion when lo and behold, up pops a video movie providing me with information that I believe I could have lived without.

There are six combat missions to get through in the first combat section. In the last of missions, you have to shoot down 50 enemy ships (yes, 50) before you get to the adventure section.

However, when you do finally get to the adventure, you will discover it's up to Coktel's usual high standard.



(Left) The combat scenes are cack!



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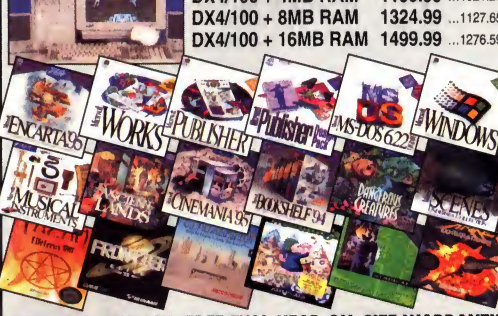
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DISCLAIMER

It is generally accepted that RPGers are a breed among themselves, much like flight sim buffs. If you're not "into" RPGs, then you don't buy or play them. Therefore this review may contain language offensive to some people. Terms such as "Advanced Dungeons and Dragons", "Twenty-sided dice", "Booty", "Ultima Underworld" and "The Forgotten Blade of Mithogakkandor, son of Mithogakkandin The Lesser" may offend those of a weak disposition.



Dungeon Master II

Seven whole years since it first came out. Four whole years since it appeared on the PC. Blocky of dungeon design, and chunky of graphics. Can *Dungeon Master II: The Legend of Skullkeep* still reach the parts other RPGs don't? "Er," says David McCandless...

A LOT CAN HAPPEN IN FOUR YEARS. Let's see. The entire cast of *Neighbours* has changed, we've watched war on TV, *Stars In Their Eyes* now exists, and Yugoslavia is no longer the country it used to be. *Duran Duran* are still around, there's a game called *Doom*, cigarettes cost 45p more, and PC's now run at 133MHz. In days of yore, there was a computer called the Atari ST, an 8MHz behemoth with built-in MIDI-ports and amazing graphics

(compared to the ZX Spectrum). On that machine was a game called *Dungeon Master*, the best, most ground-breaking Role-Playing Game Ever (then, that is). It took *Dungeons & Dragons* out of the dark, mouldy, yellow finger-nailed closet, and gave it a more rounded, acceptable feel. It was great. It was brill. It had staggeringly well-designed dungeons, a palpable atmosphere, a great feel, and addictive opiate-based gameplay. Even the graphics had a

(Above) Handy, bendy man stands in a small room, looking strangely timid.

(Right) A dwarf with pointy ears sits behind an unfeasibly huge table which is as wide as the room.

(Far right) Make use of the mighty Fire Helm... which is a, er, helm with er, fiery bits. I think.



certain *je ne sais quoi* (I remember physically jumping out of my chair as a two-frame skeleton reared up out of the dark – but I was very young then).

Now, seven years later, *Dungeon Master II* has been released, promising more thrills and spills than the original. *Legend of Skullkeep* boasts a host of new dungeons, new monsters, new artificial intelligence, and, frankly, not much more. We'll take it point-by-point.

The fights

The main difficulty with implementing a dungeon romp is combat. In real *Dungeons & Dragons*, of course, combat was silly. Roll a zillion-sided die. Look up your stats in a massive tome of "To Hit" tables.

Roll another rhombicosidodecahedron. Subtract x from y, divide by the number of people with blond hair in China, and take away the number you first thought of. You miss. Oh dear. Try again.

All very exciting you'll agree. *DM1* managed successfully to transfer the thrill of combat minus the dice. The monsters stand in front. Your two frontal party members pound them with a series of blows based on their weapons (chop for axe, jab for dagger, slice for sword etc.), while the two cowards at the rear lob spells and daggers into the fray. The monsters fight back. You pound them some more. They die. You die. All very organised and, while not particularly exciting, pretty effective.

The *Eye of the Beholder* series went and "borrowed" this system from *Dungeon Master* (as well as just about everything else) and improved it slightly by removing the "choose your blow" stuff. You just hammered, and hammered continuously. Then came *Ultima Underworld I* – simply the best and most seminal RPG ever. It rewrote the rule book on combat. Predating *Doom* or any

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 386DX

Hard Disk Space: Minimal

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards supported

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

other real-time combat games, it gave us truly realtime, mouse-controlled combat. You could actually circle your opponent, dodge blows, and chop and hack and slay – all "live" and with a flick of the mouse.

And now *DM2* takes us back seven years to the dark ages. Click on your warrior. Click on attack type. Say "Huh?" as the damage you've inflicted flashes up for an invisible pico-second. Retreat one step into a dead-end to give yourself time to activate your second warrior. He attacks. How much damage was that? Curse your Pentium for being so damn fast. Launch a dagger from your rearguard. See it fly over your opponent. Oh dear. Gasp as you realise the monster has attacked six times in the space of your three. Select your magician and launch a prepared fireball spell. Hah. And other... er, wait, what

"In *Dungeon Master II*, your first hours will be taken up 'purchasing' weapons. If we wanted to do that, we'd go down to the newsies and buy some sweeties."

were the runes? Oh shag. I've cast a "kill-everybody" spell. *Merde*.

The new fangled artificial intelligence doesn't help. The big innovation that has apparently kept *DM2* off the shelves for the majority of this century,



(Above) Many of the management screens in the game are very similar to those in the original *Dungeon Master*.



(Left) It's a shame the graphics look so simplistic, really.

has been the development of a supreme AI algorithm. And by golly, yes, the monsters are cleverer than before. The bats avoid your slow moving daggers. They run away if they suffer too much damage. And they dodge around you in mid-melee (although you can still trap them under closing portcullises). Unfortunately, a by-product of this improved brainpower is that they easily out-manoeuver and out-fight your party, hampered as it is by the most archaic combat and movement system in the world. It's like a skilled mouse-playing *Doom*Meister deathmatching a blind newbie on keyboard. They dodge around the side of you. You "quickly" turn.



« The dungeon design

In the old days, dungeons based on lateral thinking; this key in that door, this pressure pad does that, etc., etc., were fine. But now games like *Ultima Underworld* and *Doom* have raised our standards. A level of sophistication is demanded. Both architecturally and interactively. These seminal titles have fully 360 texture-mapped environments, uppy downy bits, full lighting effects, and fully scaled, fully animated sprites. *DM2* does not – at all. *Ultima Underworld*'s puzzles and quests are varied intaglios of object manipulation, clever spell casting, interaction with characters, riddle solving, and sheer dexterity. *DM2* has some of these, but doesn't even come close to *UW*'s sophistication. *DM2* is a text adventure next to *UW*. And *UW* came out three years ago!

The shops

In *Dungeon Master II*, your first couple of hours play will be taken up with "purchasing" weapons, armour and supplies. Huh? *The Elder Scrolls: Arena* and *Legends of Valour* both learnt the folly of this kind of system. It's all very well constructing, designing, nay sculpting an entire world for your RPG, but "real-world" activities, such as bartering and buying equipment, are dull. Exchanging money for goods is boring. If we wanted to do that, we'd go down to the newsie and buy some sweeties. Because RPGers want to find their booty. Want to solve intricate puzzles and find some more booty. Want to kill scary monsties and find even more booty on their still-steaming corpses. This is a quest, isn't it? *DM1* had this down to a pat. The further you got, the more booty you found. The more comprehensive you were in searching



each level, the more booty you found. It was the incentive to progress and the reward if you managed it. Buying equipment doesn't work.

And, insult to injury, the buying scenes – set in twee, medieval-type "shoppes" – are stultifyingly boring. You flick through a wall-mounted catalogue. Side step right and place your monies on a table (prices can be long-winded, so you might have to retrieve three copper pieces, two silver, and four gold, one by one from your inventory). The shopkeeper scratches his forehead or whatever and then rotates the table. You pick up your newly acquired weapon or whatever and your change (again this could consist of more coins to be tediously replaced in your backpack). Then the whole process repeats itself. Yawn.

The outside bits

Eye of the Beholder II just about pulled it off (with a rather boxy forest). *Eye of the Beholder III* failed dismally and *Ultima Underworld* didn't even bother (it knew what it was up against). The point with dungeons is that they're inside – closed up, subterranean death pits, constructed by a mega genius, arch evil wizard on a few sheets of "magic" graph paper. Outside bits deaden the sense of claustrophobia and the entire atmosphere of the game. And, besides that, *DM2*'s graphic engine just can't

(Left) Oops, all of my chaps with the exception of Cletus appear to be dead.

(Right) The outsidy bits are one of the new features... and so is the rain.

(Below) All of the bad-guy characters look decidedly cartoon-like, and, to be honest, none of them are that scary.



handle outside locations. Flick screen, grid-based RPG's work well in underground catacombs, not in exterior forests with Etcha-sketch angles.

The verdict

On the positive side, *DM2* has some new things to offer. The engine is slightly enhanced: there's now a small "in-betweeny" stage of animation as you move forward. There's the aforementioned AI. There's more frames of animation per monster (four instead of two). The sound and music is vastly improved. There's an interesting cyber-tech setting, with old-fashioned weaponry and laser technology all mixed up. But, unfortunately, *Dungeon Master II* seems to have rather arrogantly ignored all the major innovations in RPG's over the last four years. The result is a retro, old-fashioned, and visually unimpressive, desperately average RPG, which may have a nostalgic appeal for some, but will just appal modern gamers weaned on the fulsome breasts of *Underworld* and *System Shock*. The folk at FTL should have spent their not inconsiderable game designing prowess investing in a new engine and a more flexible interface.

Yours unhappily,
Disappointed of London. Z

Score

59

Disappointingly out-dated and old-fashioned RPG. For nostalgia only.

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Lords of

Toby Finlay has never had much time for spiritual healing. Fortunate, then, that Domark's new game wasn't called Lourdes of Midnight.



(Above) It's amazing the difference a new hair-doo can make.

(Right) Here's where you dish out the orders. The icons in the top-right represent different types of mission.

((Far right) Strutting past this troll, chanting "Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough" seemed like a good idea at the time.

(Right) Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the world's first real-time walking sim.



around, and your options become more interesting. You could, for instance, have small groups of your personae band their armies together, defending key areas throughout the realm, while you personally direct a covert solo operation to free Luxor. Alternatively, gather a colossal force to bash Boroth and offer Luxor nothing but flagrant disregard. Yes indeed, there's a host of strategic shenanigans for the sampling.

Look at the size of it

Lords of Midnight prides itself on its enormity. The game-map is massive and is populated by a huge number of characters who all have their own traits of personality and, until you take charge, follow their own agenda. This attempt to create a coherent, artificial universe is also reflected in the passing of time: the clock observes

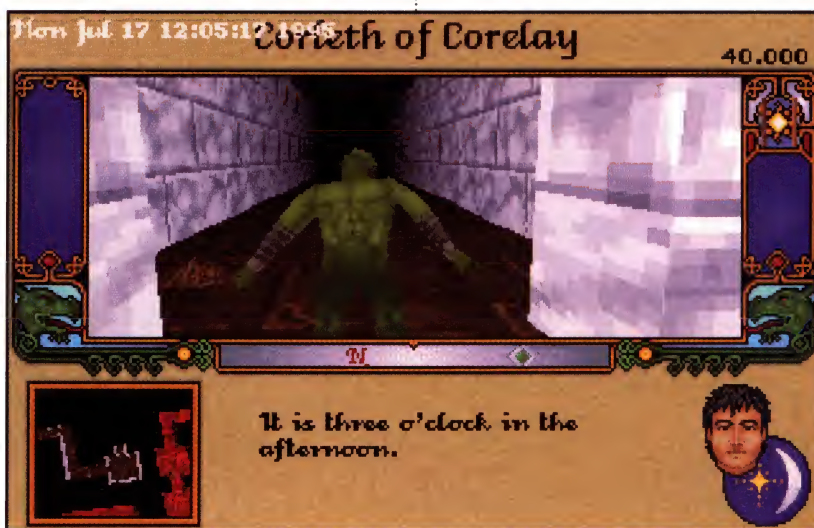
All of this bodes well for a strategy-based game; in theory, there's a lot going on to tax a militaristic mind. And at the outset, it's all fairly engaging. Organising quests is relatively simple (although the mouse-driven interface swiftly becomes painfully laborious) and there's a number of things you can have your pawns do; from finding objects to besieging citadels. Yet relative to other wargames, your powers are woefully limited; *Lords of Midnight* is no *Perfect General II*. But then, in fairness, it isn't trying to be; to make up for deficiencies in that department, it affords the ability to assume first-person control.

Unfortunately, this is where it really collapses in a miserable, spluttering heap. In this post-Doom world, the graphics are ambassadors of mediocrity, and you can trudge for miles without encountering anything of interest. So

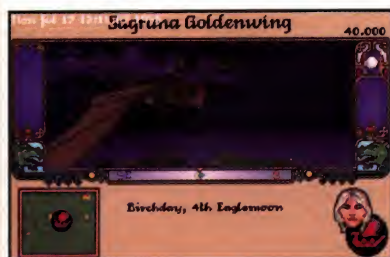
"It's as if the programmers thought 'Christ, we've been doing this for ten years', and decided to get it out of the way as quickly as possible."

not only night and day, but even the changing of the seasons – and there's nothing quite like snow for holding up an army. Apart from breaking each soldier's legs, I suppose.

when I finally did run into someone, I was quite chuffed – up popped the speech interface, and for a fleeting moment I had a sense of progress. "Please help me," seemed a reasonable



Midnight



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486 SX (486 DX recommended)
Hard Disk Space: 7Mb
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse

first line. "Alas, Prince Morkin, I cannot help you," came the feeble reply, neatly qualifying *Lords of Midnight* for the 1995 Shit Dialogue Championships.

There's just not enough to do. It didn't matter that *Midwinter* was furnished only with the bleak white-out of the snowscape because there were so many ways to become involved – so many ways, for instance, to travel around. *Midnight* may offer dragons and ships, but you're still likely to be stuck on foot: dragons can carry only one passenger at a time and I find boats to be a consistently ineffective means of inland excursion.



Even in the dungeon sections, you can roam for hours with nothing to show for it. The combat system is quite simplistic, and there aren't any magic spells to acquire. Nor could I locate any intriguing puzzles to make this whole business of direct manipulation worthwhile. And I certainly wasn't exploring for personal pleasure, seeing as the mouse control was what a particularly forgiving vicar might, on a good day, call crap (although Domark assures me it will be rectified before the game's release). Oh, and while I'm having a whinge – the sound. The "music" could have been sampled from a Hammond organ at a day-care centre. And is your CD full of alluring speech? Is it bollocks. Instead you get a "bonus" of conversions of the two prequels in all their ZX Spectrum glory.

An aeon in the making

This is quite an upsetting review to have to write because *Lords of Midnight* is so very nearly there. It's as though the programmers looked at their watches,



(Left) It's odd that while virtually all 3D PC games are now full-screen, *Lords of Midnight* returns to the windowed, *Ultima Underworld*-style days of yore.

thought "Christ, we've been doing this for ten years," and decided to get it out of the way as quickly as possible. Maybe they were so eager to create a world of sheer vastness, they overlooked issues, such as simple playability. On the other hand, for those who become sexually aroused at the prospect of a bastardised D&D-style, RPG/wargame, *Midnight* is, I suppose, without rival. But I found it singularly disappointing, considering that it had the potential to be nothing short of the Westie's testes. As it is, *Lords of Midnight* is a bit like Geoff Capes with soapy hands: huge, but not gripping. **Z**



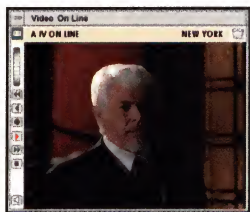
Score

60

The biggest let-down since that leak in my inflatable Claire Rayner.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Domark
Tel: 0181 780 2222

(Far left) It's time to choose your character from this rather tasty looking collection.



Possessing as much business sense as a blind hamster, Paul Presley was thrown into the deep end of corporation management and spent a lot of time wandering around going, "Huh?".

A IV Network\$

IF THERE'S ONE THING GUARANTEED TO put a game firmly into my little Black Book of Gaming Gaffes™ it's a strategy game that doesn't have a tutorial. A IV Network\$ (crazy name, crazy game) didn't have a tutorial. My Black Book™ was opened and its name was entered quicker than a Sampras serve. That'll teach it.

No it won't

No, you're right, it won't. But a lack of teaching is the main problem you'll face when trying to fathom Infogrames' latest addition to the A-Train family of products (Dodgy Segways 'R' Us). Now although it's obviously being pitched at the Sim City player – the kind of chap who enjoys all the action-packed thrills associated with big business management – it isn't nearly as user-friendly or easy to get into as the Maxis range has always proved to be.

The premise is that you are a young management trainee who has been thrown into the deep end when the AIV CEO is presumably shot down over Bosnia (on his way back from a business meeting – although why anyone would want to conduct business in Bosnia these days is beyond me). Following the digitised CNN report (starring Kathryn

A IV Network\$ allows you to do whatever you want in a business sense, but, as in all big business, headaches are a plenty. This is your chance to find out if you're a cunning, weasel-like JR or a mamby pamby Bobby.

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb

Processor: 386 DX

Hard Disk Space: 30Mb

Graphics: SVGA

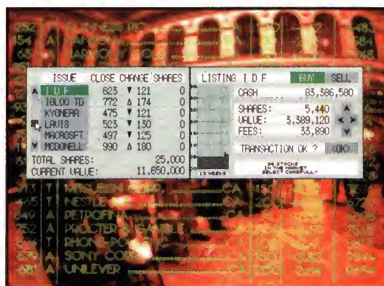
Sound: All SoundBlaster compatibles

Controls: Mouse

Sparkes as herself!) confirming this tragedy, up pops another digitised video clip from James Coburn (for it is he) as the supposed missing chairman, revealing that it's all a cunning tax dodge or something like that, and for the time being he wants you to try running the company to see if you can take over for him when he retires.

In like Flynn

And so it begins. Literally. You are then thrown straight into the simulation, armed with precious little information

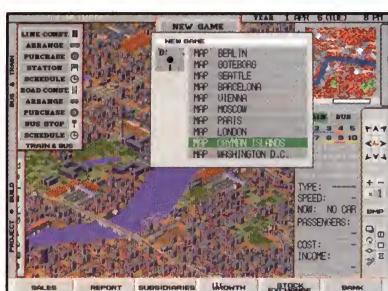


on how the company works, how the game works and how "big business" works. The manual takes you through each of the control icons, but never do you get a guide as to what action will have what effects and how the game's structure works – something that is essential in order to successfully play the game. You're given several scenarios (each a major city in the world) to get lost in... But hang on, I'm not really being fair...

A fair review – Take one

...Slatting a game because of my own lack of intelligence (or business savvy, as I believe men with suits put it) isn't the right way to do this. A IV Network\$ is likely to be very, very good indeed if corporate management is your groovy love thang. It's comprehensive enough, that's for sure, and allows you to do pretty much whatever you want in a business sense, from building a marketplace from scratch (in the Cayman Islands) to taking over the running of a major transport conglomerate and taking it to new heights (in, say, London).

Headaches are aplenty as problems crop up all over the place, stock prices plummet and your platinum membership into the Big Businessman's Club is revoked. But that's it. It's not Sim City, it's "Sim Business". If business is what floats your boat, then it's hooray for Hollywood. But if you'd rather deal with things on a more simplistic level, stick with what's already out there. **Z**



Score

80

But for business majors only (whatever they are).

Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Infogrames Tel: 0171 738 8199

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PC ZONE

Simon Bradley reviewed the original *US Navy Fighters* for us in January, but both he and his wife got stropky when we forgot to print his name next to it. So here it is... Simon Bradley (again.)



Marine Fighters

IF YOU HAVE A GOOD MEMORY, AND ARE a regular reader of this magazine, you may remember that a while back we waxed lyrical about the wonders of *US Navy Fighters*. The graphics, flight and whole thing were heaped in praise, and the entire editorial team lined up to lick it clean. Basically, we liked it, and thought that it rated very well against the available opposition. In fact, it was (and still is) bloody good. But time stands still for no-one, especially in this business, and there are now a number of other flight sims guaranteed to give your video card a damn good thrashing on the market. So Electronic Arts, not wanting to rest on its laurels, has released a follow up. *Marine Fighters* features new aircraft, new weapons and a new campaign scenario. It still doesn't offer networking facilities, though.

So it's really different, then?

No, not really. The aircraft are pretty neat, and fly okay; the new weapons are handy, but they should have been there before, and the new campaign is good. Nothing earth-shattering at first glance. But don't be misled, because beating

beneath this cold marketing ploy to squeeze more money out of us poor sods who bought the original, lies the heart of a stonking good sim.

What's so good?

First of all the aircraft. You get the British Sea Harrier and the American AV8-B Harrier derivative. You get the Yak 141 Freestyle, the Russian Supersonic Harrier rival and, wait for it, the AC130. This is essentially a gunship version of the AC130 Hercules transport. Basically, take a large cargo plane, point a 20mm, 40mm and 105mm cannon out one side, and fly around in circles blowing seven bells of crap out of whatever is on the ground in the middle. Now you tell me - when did you last get to fly a four-engine transport in a combat flight sim? And what about having British aircraft involved as well? Does this mean we can look forward to more appalling British accents when the release version with the video clips comes out? Who knows.

But the real plus is the difficulty of the campaign. *US Navy Fighters* had a campaign, but it was a little too simple

Tech specs

Note: Requires *US Navy Fighters* CD

Memory: 4Mb

Processor: 486SX/25

Graphics: VGA, SVGA up to 1280x1024

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, mouse or joystick

once your tactics got sorted. With this release, the enemy intelligence is far better, resulting in some seriously hard enemy pilots and gunners. Another refreshing change is the departure from the normal Uncle Sam bullshit that tends to appear in manuals. This time, you get the truth. The US of A is cementing relations with Japan by invading the neighbouring Kurile Islands, which belong to Russia and which the Japanese have coveted since the end of the last war. This area, well known and beloved to experienced Falcon 3/MiG 29 jocks, is small, wet and full of goodies to shoot at. And get shot at by. Now of course, the Ivans aren't

(Top) The in-game graphics are absolutely stunning, wouldn't you agree?

(Right) Yep, massive airborne punch-ups are the order of the day.



(Right) The ground detail is almost as impressive as the aircraft. Stunning really, isn't it?



In Perspective

So many flight sims, so little time. *US Navy Fighters* and *Marine Fighters* are probably the best sims you can buy at the moment.

US Navy Fighters

Marine Fighters

Fleet Defender

TFX

likely to take this lying down, and so the scene is set for a limited global confrontation, if such a thing exists.

But what about the flying?

US Navy Fighters wasn't at all bad when it came down to the nitty gritty of flying. *Marine Fighters* is at least as good. Although I haven't had the pleasure of driving a Harrier or Freestyle, they seem to be about as difficult to hover as you'd expect. Unlike a lot of games of this genre, *Marine Fighters* doesn't ignore the subtle nasties that can come out and bite your bum when you least expect it. You know, things like high-speed stalls, spins, and so on. So you have to be on your toes the whole time.

Although taking off is pretty much a sterilised affair (relying simply on judicious application of welly), landing is a bit more exciting and frequently results in the use of the nylon elevator, unless you are skilled, practised and patient. They've taken a few liberties and fitted an arrestor hook to the AC130 (and allowed it to use the cat), which is a little unlikely, but other than that it all seems okay.

Combat can be pretty tense at times, especially when you remember that none of the aircraft in *Marine Fighters* carry an internal jammer. And there's a MiG climbing all over you. And he's already nailed your wingman. But you can win, although there seems to be more emphasis on using your resources

wisely and fighting a tactical action than just charging in and killing everything. Although, of course, that may be the best option for the situation...

What about some details?

The Harriers and AV8-Bs are pretty cool because they are fast, manoeuvrable and well armed. The AV8-B has the added advantage of a built-in FLIR (that's Forward Looking Infra Red) system, which should allow you to see ahead in the dark or fog by projecting a synthetic view of the world ahead onto your HUD. Unfortunately, EA has chosen not to implement this, at least not on the Beta version I have here, so you get none of the advantages. But it is a damn sexy plane, and British as well.

The hardware supplied for moving mud has improved with the addition of snakeye retarded bombs and LAU 10 and 61 unguided rockets. Although this kit won't help you stay alive, it'll help you deal with the AAA and SAM launchers. Also, HARMS now work properly.

Previously, this anti-radar missile worked whenever a radar was around, which is kinda unrealistic. So they fixed it. Now it only works when the radar is on all the time, and probably tracking something. If nothing else, this makes for an interesting flight. Your wingman seems to be a little smarter than before, although he is an undisciplined git and will go off on his own at the slightest provocation. Must be American.

When you get into action, you'll find the padlock view to be quite good, once you get used to it. You get no clues about height, speed, attitude, anything really, unless the bandit is in a position where you can see him, but, other than that, it is okay. Again, you get useful feedback from your wingman or back seater (AC130 only), and you may well find that you talk to yourself (figuratively, that is) as well as giving audible

clues as to what the bandit is up to. And yes, your colleague will still say things that will surprise you at times. Your weapons are pretty good, although delivering dumb bombs accurately is still a bitch of a job.

So you reckon it's okay?

Overall, it's damn fine. It would be nice to see the synthetic FLIR picture in the AV8-B. It would be nice to see more British aircraft. And it would be nice to see network facilities. But other than that, I have few grumbles. Apart from the ridiculous demand it makes on your processing power. No point in going into detail, you've heard it all before.

Anyway, *US Navy Fighters* was the dog's doobies as far as I'm concerned. I mean, I actually paid money for my own copy. *Marine Fighters* is a logical progression, and offers a good campaign, which will keep you busy for a while and some interesting aircraft to play with. If you like flight sims and own the inevitable ninja PC, then you'll love it. Go out, buy and enjoy. I know I shall. **Z**

Score

92

Would even get 100 if it had a network facility. Come on guys, do it!

Price: £TBA Release Date: Out now
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Tel: 01753 549442



(Left) The detail of the aircraft is so defined, you can even see the pilots in the cockpits!

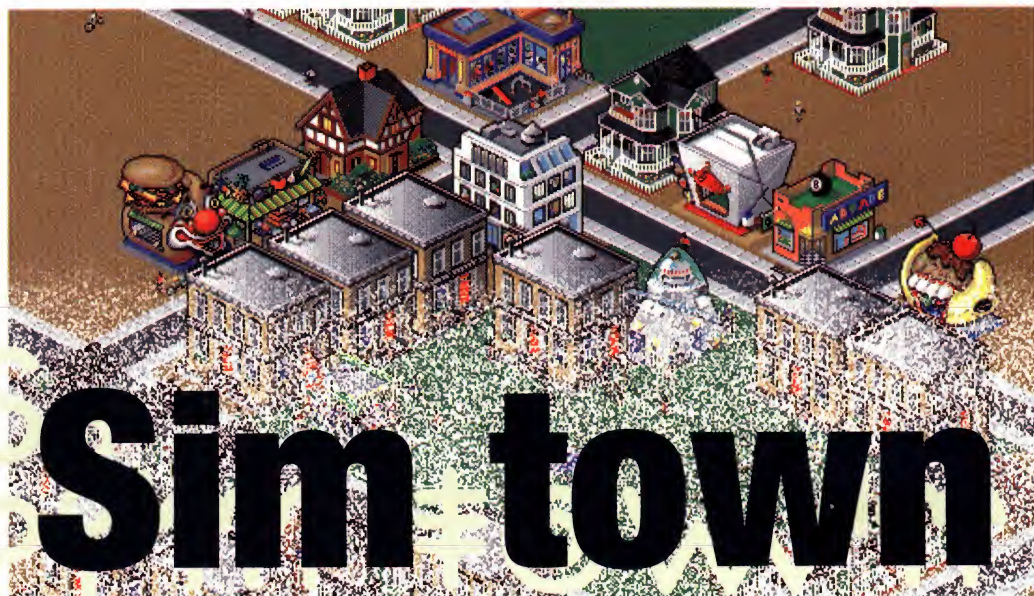


Charlie Brooker changes his name to **Stetson Loudmouth the Third** and sets about kicking some cutesy sim butt down the mall.

SIM TOWN IS PROBABLY BEST described as "SimCity Junior". It's basically a simplified version of its phenomenally popular predecessor, aimed squarely at children aged eight to twelve. But whilst the strategic elements have been made far simpler, the visuals have been given a thorough going over with a bucketful of cute paint. And while I was playing it, I was cursing my luck that this sort of thing wasn't around when I was a kid.

Creating a town is fairly simple, and will be second nature to anyone who's played *SimCity 2000* for more than ten minutes. You slap down some roads (or cycle paths if you're feeling particularly green), then place various types of building (residential, commercial or "fun stuff") in strategic locations. The aim is to create a kind of glistening, shimmering Utopia, balancing the economy, the ecosphere, and the overall quality of life as best you can. As an educational tool, it's kind of like taking geography, social studies, town planning and environmental studies classes all at the same time – with enough fun *en route* to distract attention away from the fact that basically, you're being educated at the same time.

Unlike its big brother, *Sim town* presents you with the opportunity to be really, really nosy. You can look inside people's houses and see what they're up to. You can find out who that bloke walking down the street is, what he does for a living, and how he's feeling today. You can even design a character all of your own and give him or her a natty house to live in and then read the entries in his/her diary as time progresses. In addition, to keep the little ones occupied, the whole town acts like a kind of organic Fisher Price Activity Centre – click on a piano in somebody's living room and it starts playing, click



(Above) Here's my own pet town – Armpit. Note the eclectic mix of styles (Tudor-style cottages jostling alongside garish burger bars).

on the fruit and veg at the grocer's and watch them dance about on the roof... that kind of thing. In fact, it kept me going for ages. I was gurgling like an idiot and sucking my thumb by the end.

Yankee Doodle Bollocks

The graphics are brilliantly designed, managing somehow to pack masses of detail into each small element, yet leave the whole thing looking as crisp and clear as an illustration in a children's book. There's a pleasing selection of silly sound effects to accompany the action, too.

The only downside is the stomach-churning Yankness to the whole thing – it's packed full of burger joints and video arcades; all the inhabitants wear back-to-front baseball caps and ride skateboards. In fact, it's so American, you half expect your Sim Citizens to erect a statue of Abraham Lincoln before bombing the town next door.

However, there's a pretty heavy-handed message lurking away behind all of this toytown kerfuffle. The player is encouraged, nay, practically forced at gunpoint, to create an ecologically friendly town. The financial side of *Sim town* has been replaced by a "natural resource" credit system: every item you place on the map will cost you a number of trees, or a few gallons of water from the lake. And you'd better start recycling your rubbish, damn you, or else your pretty little dream town turns into the Armpit City of Death in a trice.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb RAM

Processor: 386 DX minimum

Hard Disk Space: 20Mb HD space for full installation

Graphics: SVGA (640 X 480, 256 colours)

Sound: SoundBlaster compatibles

Controls: Mouse essential

Notes: Requires Windows and Microsoft Win32S extension for Windows in order to run: luckily this is included on the CD

It's well-designed, easy on the eye, genuinely educational, and most important of all, really good fun. If you're a little kid, that is. If you've got any spare children lying around, buy them a copy of this and, if they don't appreciate it, then there's something wrong with them. For which, as a parent, you can only blame yourself. So there. Just don't be surprised if they start asking for trips to the local mall or a big slice of apple pie. **Z**

Score

81

Fun and educational in equal measures. It's a nice place – but I wouldn't want to live there.

Price: £29.99 **Release Date:** Out now

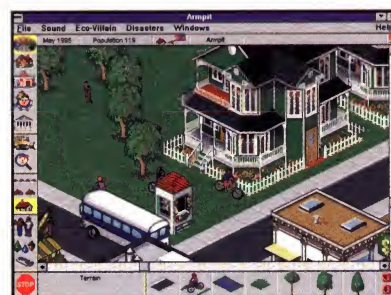
Publisher: Maxis

Tel: 0171 490 2333



(Left) You can even create your own customised resident. Mine's yer average US of A kiddywink.

(Right) Here's the town in close up. You can click on almost anything in sight and find out all about it. If you want.



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**PC
ZONE**
RECOMMENDED

AirPower

It takes place in a parallel universe, it's got planes in it, and it's a bit odd. It must be designed by Rowan. **Patrick McCarthy's** the only one with a complete set of thermals. If only he'd change them occasionally...

ROWAN HAS BECOME A SPECIALIST at peculiar flight sim scenarios — Flight Sims From The X Files, you might call them, if you were particularly desperate for inspiration. This one takes place in a parallel universe, which means that the planes all look slightly familiar, but slightly... not. Despite this parallel universe, there has still been a First World War, which is pretty spooky, and probably says a lot about man's inhumanity to Man cutting across all universes, Captain. Even more spookily, it's actually recognised as the First World War, because this officially takes place "between the two world wars", which seems to indicate they know there's going to be another one. What a cheering prospect. Perhaps this foreknowledge will impact in other ways. What's the point of studying in school, worrying about your ever increasing beer belly, or learning to ride a bicycle, if you know that you will probably be killed in a couple of years?

Maybe the whole disillusioned Generation X thing takes place 60 years earlier in this universe. Maybe not.

Anyway, the country in which this takes place has been ruled by one family, the Aryan Dynasty (sounds like they're related to our own dear Queen)

for several centuries. The Emperor has recently died, and — gasp — his son, the rightful successor to the throne, has also "slipped away" in mysterious circumstances. (Probably assassinated by enterprising modern architects.) The four remaining family members have

differing resources according to who you are. One warmonger-type has long been set for military conflict, but has little in the way of support facilities. Another is conciliatory, but has good ground defenses, four squadrons of top fighters and a garrison of crack troops —

"None of this flying-for-three-hours-in real-time-before-you-reach-the-target malarkey. They've gone for action and (dare we say it?) fun all the way."

now started bickering over who has the rights to the throne. Except that, since they're all royally rich, they're bickering with guns and planes.

Your task is to take the part of one of the four heirs; wade through the cities in your path, destroying or forming alliances as you see fit, until you unite the land beneath your jack-booted (or elegantly slipped) heel, and are safely ensconced in the capital.

Choices, choices

Your first decision will be: which of the four heirs you'll select. You'll have

clearly, the development of drugs continues with greater pace in this universe. The third is in a bit of a state, with some defenses still being erected and some AAA batteries having been lost in transit, but with a people who are "enthusiastic fighters". And the last is ill-prepared for the conflict, with few guns and little in the way of top pilots.

I'm okay, you're okay

Who you choose will affect how you progress through the game, and tactics that you adopt with one character may well not work if you use them with

(Right) Although based on real planes, none of the aircraft are exactly what you'd call normal.





(Left) The familiar Rowan screen layout is present, but the quality of the polygons, and in particular, the ground-based stuff, is far superior to those in previous titles.

(Below left) The airships are quite a nice touch.



another. This is because the mayors of the towns and cities, whom you will try to unite, will react according to your reputation (and behaviour in the game).

If you're a ruthless, unpleasant fascist with scant regard for human life and even less for personal hygiene, and you approach a town that's populated by reasonable human beings, they are unlikely to willingly join your cause even if they're very poorly armed. You'll have to "suppress" (read: bomb the shit out of) them first. Or, if you're Mister Nice Guy, trying to take control by being reasonable with everyone, preferring to talk rather than fight, and you approach a city that's chocka with war-mongering swine (Norwich, for example), then they too are unlikely to join your cause — preferring instead to

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb

Processor: 486 or higher

Hard Disk Space: 17Mb

Graphics: SVGA or VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, Keyboard or joystick

pour scorn, oil and pots of warm urine over your head. In which case you'll have to put aside your humanitarian principles, and launch a rocket attack on their RSPCA building, or something.

The other scenario: you're a psychotic killing machine, they're psychotic killing machines — could go either way.

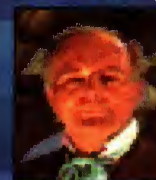


(Left) Although looking like a bubbling cauldron that some old witch would use, this is, in fact, the map.

Your Advisors

You have three knowledgeable advisors to help you through the more traumatic decisions of your campaign: they'll tell you whether or not a peaceful solution may be possible, or if not, how long it will take to crunch the cockroach-like opponents under your glorious foot.

Mr Brown (Nose)



Mr Brown (Nose) is a diplomat, specially hired for his tolerance of having flecks of other people's waste products on the end of his nose. It bothers

him so little, he even eats his breakfast immediately afterwards. (Marmite on toast, since you ask.) If you ask his advice before torching a city, he may well offer you the option of a peaceful settlement (if he thinks he can carry it off). Don't ask how he does it, or what humiliating practices he happily carries out to ensure your peaceful progress. Just wait for him to put his teeth back in, and give him a big, grateful kiss.

Mr... er, Black



I know, I know, nobody should be allowed to be called Mr Black, because it starts arguments, but this man deserves it.

This is who'll tell you exactly how long it will take to reduce the targeted city's orphanages to a blazing heap of nappy-strewn rubble. "We can take them," he'll say, or, "Given time, we can take them," or even, "Given time and a small thermonuclear device, we can take them." He's as hard as nails, and despite the poncey jacket, he's all man. Just ask the diplomat. He's had 'im.

Mr Yellow



Your First Officer is a complete wuss. All he ever says is "We should wait for reinforcements," or, "Are you sure you haven't put too much salt in that sauce?" Don't waste your time talking to him. And if he gives you any lip, throw him naked to the men in D-Block. (Eh? — Ed.)



« Either they will bow to your savage reputation and work alongside you, or they'll think you're not hard enough because you brush your teeth, and they'll laugh right in your face. (Which, if they don't brush their teeth, will be very unpleasant.) Either way, there's probably a self-help book to be written about it.

Martadella Maisie and her twangy guitar

Have I mentioned the airships? You start from airships, which means that you're never far from where you want to go. (In fact, I believe that was the first airship's advertising catchphrase.) Which means piling straight into the action. And although the facility is there for you to spend a certain amount of time "negotiating" via your diplomat (Thanks to multi-choice answers, this can be quite interesting.), you don't have to use him at all; you can just shoot everyone. Which is also good news for the terminally impatient, as is the fact that there's a traditional "get up there and start shooting" mode, incorporating all the mission types that occur in the game: ground bombing, rocket attacks, dogfighting and airship assaults.

The planes seem to have pretty good flight models. It's

hard to be more specific, since they're from a parallel universe. But they stall and flop about pretty well. And if you can't cope, you can improve your engines and make things easier.

Other details are nice, too: rocket paths dip due to the effects of gravity; explosions are good (especially on low-level bombing runs); and enemy planes disintegrate spectacularly when you shoot them down. If you're really lazy, you can make yourself invulnerable, have unlimited weapons and fly home on auto-pilot (which, since you have to "land" by attaching yourself to a hook under the airship, is an extremely welcome opportunity).

Oh, and the graphics are good, too. It looks like you're flying about through real cities, with real buildings that explode in real ways when you "accidentally" bomb them. (You might get told off about bombing civilians, by the way, but don't let it bother you. Look on it as condemnation from the UN, or something equally trivial.)

AirPower is not the most "serious" flight sim, but it makes a nice change. The designers have had a bit of fun with the planes, but they all look pretty believable, and are most of all, fun.

If you have already played the two best ww1 flight sims (*Knights of the Sky* and *Red Baron*), but quite fancy the idea of seat-of-the-pants flying, the style of the planes make this a viable alternative. **Z**

(Left) The bigger a city is, the more difficult it usually is to take over (unless it's a UN safe haven, of course).

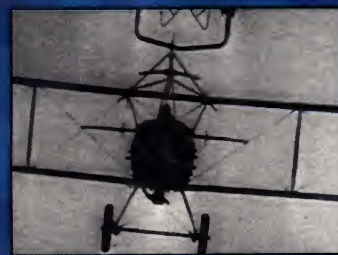
The smaller, inconsequential towns will probably give in as soon as your diplomat sets foot in the door. Unless they're morally opposed to your appalling human rights record, of course, or you're so soft that they think they can take you with only a milk-shake straw and a supply of marrowfat peas. In that case, you might have one mission to pull off before the town, its gold and its nubile, underage exotic dancers are yours, all yours.

The larger towns and cities are a different proposition entirely: you have six or seven more missions to complete before you can hang your pants on the back of its door and call it home.

Reconnaissance and Fun

Given the (parallel) time period, your planes don't have any of the fancy weaponry, luxuriously-appointed cockpits and sophisticated anti-gravity coffee-percolators that you've come to expect from modern-day flight sims. And certainly no on-board target locators, or any of that noncey junk. All you get is a map and a seat to your pants, which you should use if you want to get anywhere. It's old-fashioned flying all the way.

But there is one thing that will help you pick out the thing you have to bomb (or shoot, or rocket) the shit out of. No, they haven't painted all the targets with Smiley faces. This universe isn't that parallel; it's a black and white reconnaissance film, which shows your target from a number of angles. Helpfully, it also zooms out to show the surrounding countryside, in case you get lost. All you have to do is find it in colour, which won't be that hard, because they've gone for the "action all the way" option. None of this flying-for-three-hours-in-real-time-before-you-reach-the-target malarkey. They've gone for action and (dare we say it, in a flight sim?) fun. Whatever the mission, the target will be nearby when you start it.



Score

84

Imaginative, action-packed, and good in bed.

Price: £44.99

Release Date: 21st September

Publisher: Mindscape Tel: 01444 246333



Competition

WIN!

Fancy winning some very expensive *Aliens* models? Well we've got loads of the buggers to give away...



FIFTY QUID A POP FOR THESE THINGS apparently. Fifty quid! For an overgrown Airfix kit of a dirty great big alien. They are quite spectacular when you get them out of the box and actually build them, though. If you think of how big the Alien Queen was in *Aliens*, and then consider that the model is actually 1/12th scale, I'm sure you can imagine these turn out to be rather fabby looking bits of plastic. Obviously, you've got to fiddle about with lots of smelly glue and then paint the things, but that's all part of the fun, isn't it?

If it's anything to judge the appeal by, we've had a huge pile of these kits in the office for the past week or so, and I reckon that more people have tried to nick them than any other prize we've had in the building. Cool huh?

If you want to get your hands on one, simply answer the following questions, fill in the tie breaker and send your entry into us by September 1st.

What was the name of the young girl in *Aliens*?

- a) Deborah
- b) Newt
- c) Ziggy

What burst from John Hurt's stomach in the original *Alien* movie?

- a) Shane Ritchie
- b) A small French person
- c) An alien

Who directed the original *Alien* movie?

- a) Quentin Tarantino
- b) Ridley Scott
- c) Andy Warhol

Tie Breaker...

(to be completed in 30 words or less)

Shane Ritchie should be devoured by aliens because...

Send your entries to:

Aliens Competition
PC Zone
Dennis Publishing
19 Bolsover St
London
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Rules

All entries must be received by September 1st 1995 and no correspondence will be entered into... so, for god's sake, don't call us. No relatives of Dennis employees are allowed to enter and neither is anyone who works for, or is related to anyone who works for Mindscape.

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When Gametek originally announced *Frontier: First Encounters* everyone was excited. When Gametek finally released *Frontier: First Encounters* everyone wanted to kill them. **Paul Presley** takes a look at the collapse of a legend.

"Gametek should be levelled for"

Frontier: Worst

WELL, IT ALL STARTED FAIRLY routinely. After achieving success with *Frontier: Elite II*, Gametek and David Braben decided to hit us with a third in the series. Originally a data disk, *First Encounters* eventually became an entirely new game. Although the reasons behind that transformation are clouded in mystery and legal red tape, the outcome was that in mid-April Gametek finally released what it thought would be the final version. Little did it realise how much damage it was about to cause.

The game was rushed into the hands of the retailers, who hurriedly rushed it into the hands of the public. Initial sales went through the roof, with over 60,000 units being shipped out of the initial run. Curiously, though, the major magazines hadn't managed to review the game prior to release, many only getting their copies days before editorial deadlines. In a rush to get the words "First Encounters Review" on to their covers before anyone else, most weren't able to devote any real time to covering the game, and instead bought into the pre-release hype. It wasn't until a stream of bug reports started hitting

the Internet, Gametek's Customer Support lines and magazine offices in general, that the ugly truth surfaced.

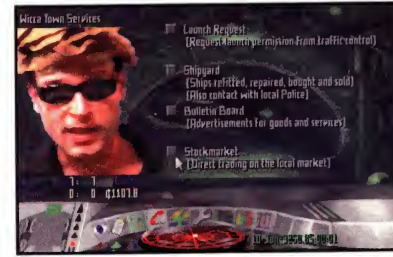
Unrecoverable errors

Conference groups across the Internet were being filled with horror stories. Initial counts showed that there were over a thousand complaint messages in Gametek's support conference alone. "I've tried loading but all that comes up is a total system crash!"; "There are more bugs in this game than in a few square miles of tropical rainforest!"; and even "Gametek should be levelled for releasing a piece of shit like this!" were just some of the newsgroup postings which were quickly summing up the players' mood. People were even complaining of being used as unpaid game-testers by Gametek, and no one was able to get any response from the company itself. This wasn't helped by Gametek's European managing director, Kelly Sumner, releasing this statement on April 24th, days after the bug reports had started hitting the Internet: "There are so many different pc's out there with many different configurations. There has been one problem that has

cropped-up; an incompatibility between the game and some sound cards. *First Encounters* is a very popular title - we shipped some 60,000 units just before Easter. That's why it appears to be a bigger problem. It's just a percentage of a large volume of products."

Indeed there was a problem with sound card compatibility - with the SoundBlaster cards. But was it really possible that both Frontier Development (the people credited with the programming) and Gametek's testing department didn't have a single pc with a SoundBlaster card (the most popular sound card in existence)?

While the bug reports continued to mount across the board, the following message appeared on CompuServe on May 16th, describing the presence of Braben's original programming code for *First Encounters* contained on the actual game disks: "It contains lots of 'c' SOURCE CODE, and makes an interesting read. It's interesting to read the ship-stats and the algorithms used for the game. Useful hacking information may be contained within also, but I haven't looked too deeply yet. There's also lots of mission messages in un-encrypted



*Quote taken from a newsgroup posting just days after the release of *Frontier: First Encounters*

releasing a piece of shit like this"

Encounters

form." This particular information revealed that the vast amount of the supposed new features simply didn't exist - from the new alien races to the fabled *Mirage* ship. It even showed that the supposed storyline regarding the re-appearance of the *Thargoids* was little more than a handful of modified military missions.

Damaging Damage Limitation

Gametek tried to cover up this little *faux pas* by releasing the first of what has so far risen to be five patch disks. But why five patch disks for a single sound card fault? Sumner's press statement was soon revealed to be little more than an attempt at damage limitation. As well as fixing seven of the smaller bugs, the patch also deleted the embarrassing source code file. A statement by Gametek on CompuServe detailed the patch disk and went on to say how some problems were unlikely to ever be fixed. The saved game convertor wouldn't be appearing; the new combat system simply turned off your ship's engines when an enemy approached; and perhaps most amusingly of all: "Occasional death when entering or leaving space

stations will unfortunately always happen. The game uses very complex systems, occasionally it gets its maths wrong and miss times things."

A program that sometimes gets its maths wrong? Gamesplayers were soon wondering how anyone had had the audacity to associate *First Encounters* with the word "game".

This wasn't the biggest embarrassment Gametek would face, though. The catalogue of errors was about to include a special pull-out supplement, as people discovered that the patch disk, rather than repairing the original game code (as is standard practice), deleted most of the original files and substituted them with updated versions. This effectively meant that anyone could simply take a copy of the patch disk (which was freely available from the Internet), unzip the files and have a free copy of the still bugged *First Encounters*.

Bye bye Miss American Pie

Gametek wasn't only facing problems with British users either. *First Encounters* was shipped to America in the middle of the European fiasco. However, rather than supplying the States with the

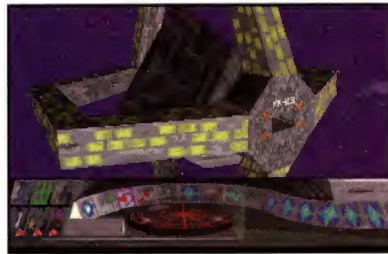
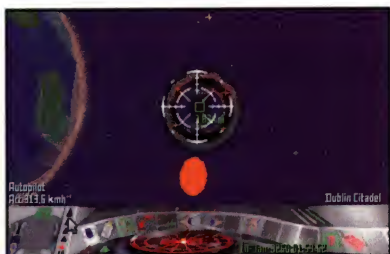
original version of the game, Gametek sent out the still-bugged but slightly patched 1.01 version. American users now had a virtually unplayable game that wasn't compatible with any of the subsequent patch disks, all of which required the original v1.00.

Game over for Gametek?

Gametek has now released an updated copy of the boxed game, bearing the legend "Re-Mastered Version". However, this is simply the original game with the most current patch (v1.05) applied. It still contains all the problems that weren't fixable, as well as a bunch of smaller bugs. Not that gamesplayers seem to care anymore.

If there's anything good that has come out of this, it has to be that future Gametek products will certainly be more thoroughly tested.

Does anyone remember the Italian car fiasco from years ago? As soon as everyone sussed that they rusted, car companies started providing long anti-corrosion warranties, and suddenly cars lasted much longer... Let's hope that Gametek learns from this, and that all its future games are bug-free. Z





Tony Split

He's a tightfisted git

We needed someone to write our new budget column, so we asked **Chris Anderson** if he knew what budget games were. "I haven't got a budgie", he replied. We brought in his mate **Tony** to give him a hand.

WELCOME, WELCOME, WELCOME to our brand-new budget games and compilation column. Every month, from this issue on, we will be checking out what's best (and what's crap) on the budget scene. To celebrate this truly momentous occasion, we're going to kick off with a look at what's coming out on Electronic Arts' new budget label, modestly entitled "EA Classics". We're featuring EA for two reasons. Firstly, most of the titles on the EA Classics label look dead smart. Secondly (and more importantly) EA has just taken us all out for a lovely lunch at our very favourite Thai restaurant. All games will be given a score out of five based on, a) how cool they are, b) whether or not they're still playable (let's face it, they've all been around for a while), and c) how much value for money they are. So shake the dust off your wallets (or purses, sorry girls) and come with us on a journey into the wonderful land of cheap games.

Syndicate Plus

Well here's a bargain if ever we saw one. *Syndicate*, complete with all the missions on one CD for just over a tenner.

This is still an excellent strategic shoot 'em up. The graphics are superb, the music's cool and the gameplay is dangerously addictive. All the action is in real-time; the missions get progressively more difficult and there's enough of them to keep you blasting away for weeks. Excellento!

SCORE 00000
PRICE £11.99

Strike Commander

This is a great buy if you love flight sims but can't get your head round the more tech-heavy ones (like *Tornado* etc.).

Flying in *Strike Commander* is peasy-weasy, and the emphasis is purely on arcade entertainment. It has a typically melodramatic *Origin*-esque storyline, and the graphics still look well decent in spite of its age. Even on its own it would be good value for money at this price, but EA have ensured it will go screaming up the value-ometer by including all the extra missions that were released for the game in this package.

SCORE 00000
PRICE £11.99

Wing Commander 2

Cool, cool, cool. Super game alert. I'm the only person in the whole world who likes *Wing Commander* and not *X-wing* and I don't care etc. (Bloody hell, he's off.

Ed.) Admittedly, WC2 is not as good as the newly Mark Hammilised WC3, but then, you don't need a Sextium PC with two million megs of ram to run it. So for the vast majority of you this is the one to go for. This version includes all the extra missions and speech packs.

SCORE 00000
PRICE £11.99

Privateer

Blimey, another fab game, complete with all its extra bits (*Righteous Fire* and the speech packs). This is basically *Wing Commander* with *Elite*-style trading sections in it, and pretty smart it is too.

Absolutely gorgeous graphics are combined with *Wing Commander*-type intergalactic dog-fighting and a stirring soundtrack. Smart!

SCORE 00000
PRICE £11.99

Populous 2 and Powermonger

Populous 2 is basically a graphically improved *Populous 1*, which makes it a damn fine game in my book.

Powermonger is looking a bit dated now but it's still a reasonably playable strategy game, nonetheless.

SCORE 0000
PRICE £11.99

Seal Team

Good strategy game which was slagged off when it came out for needing a ninja PC. Needless to say it runs fine

PRIVATEER 00000



POPULOUS 2 0000

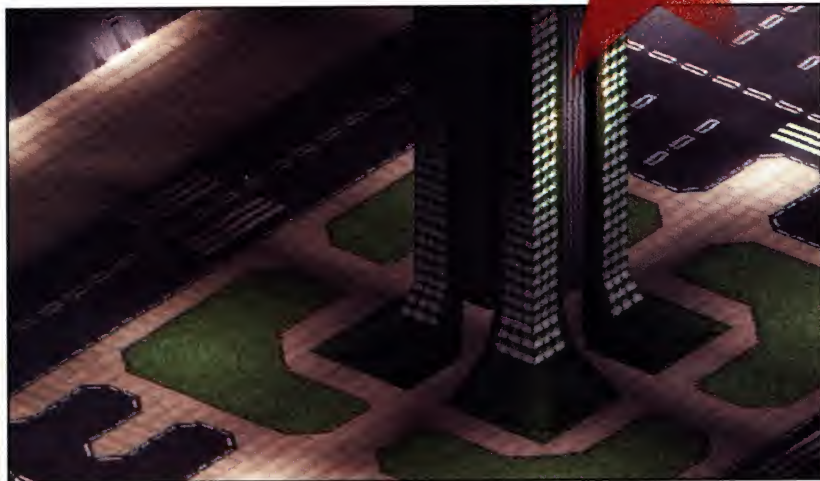


SEAL TEAM 0000



BARGAIN

BARGAIN



SYNDICATE PLUS 00000

now on Pentiums and decent 486s. So, er, it's safe to buy it now if you want to.

SCORE 0000
PRICE £11.99

SSN Seawolf

Cool submarine sim which was universally drooled over when it came out and still looks the business now.

It's probably a bit too complex for casual strategists (the manual's big and frightening), but if you're really into this sort of stuff you'll love it.

SCORE 0000
PRICE £11.99

Shadowcaster

This is Origin's attempt at producing a Doom-type game with wizards and other silly people in it. Suffice to say, it is not considered a masterpiece in the world of computer entertainment. In other words, it's crap.

SCORE 00
PRICE £11.99

Michael Jordan in Flight

Considering the title of this game, you could be forgiven for mistaking it for a flight sim. The blurb on the back of the box even challenges you to "control Michael Jordan and his entire air

arsenal". I was somewhat surprised then when I loaded it up, only to discover it is actually a basketball game. I was even more surprised to discover that it's a pile of doggy-doo.

SCORE 0
PRICE £11.99

In addition to these budget bargs, EA has a compilation featuring both *Wing Commander 1* and *2* in their entirety, for a measly £34.99. It also has *Ultima 6* and *Wing Commander 1* in one package for just £49.99.

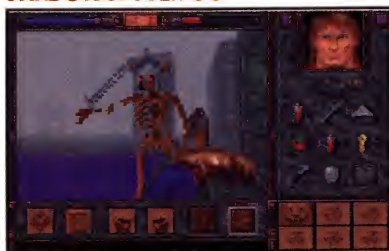
For more details on these and any of the other budget titles featured in this month's issue, call Electronic Arts on: 01753 549442. **Z**



Coming Soon

Next month we'll be with Virgin, featuring its White Label range of budget games from Virgin, and there's some really smart stuff on it, too. So make sure you don't miss out. Join me and Tony again next month (if I haven't killed him by then) for another gargantuan budget-fest.

SHADOWCASTER 00



Right then, it's time to have a little chat with my mate Tony to get the all-important tight-fisted git rating on this month's games. I've given him £50 and told him to spend it on his fave games in this month's column. Will he buy a whole host of budget goodies, or will he blow the lot on a compilation? Let's find out...

Chris: Alright Tony, you've got the cash, what are you going to buy?

Tony: Nothing!

Chris: Eh?

Tony: I don't want anything, I would rather keep the money.

Chris: You bastard! I gave you that to buy games with.

Tony: Oh alright then. Let me see, what's worth having out of that lot? I'll take *Syndicate Plus*, *Strike Commander*, *Privateer*, and the *Wing Commander 1* and *2* compilation.

Chris: You haven't got enough money for that.

Tony: I will have if you lend me £20.

Chris: Christ, you really are a git, aren't you? Alright, here's the games, give me the cash.

Tony: Bollocks to that, I'm off.

Chris: I'll have you for this.

Tony: See you round, sucker.

Chris: Crikey, what a git, eh?



PRIVATEER 0000



VideoGalaxy Oscar

More "Now you can watch crap videos on your PC" action as **Dave Mathieson** has a look at this budget MPEG card.

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT YOUR good-old (or monster brand-new) PC is naturally crap at is pretending that it's a video recorder. While videotape may stretch, snap, deteriorate and otherwise bugger up, you can get a whole week's worth of *Going for Gold* onto a single tape, costing a fiver. Your average CD-ROM or hard disk, on the other hand, is barely capable of storing the funny story at the end of *News at Ten*. This is why video has remained the last bastion of analogue-ness when everything else has gone digital. Apart from the general hi-tech sexiness of being able to watch a film from a CD, the ease with which digital information can be searched, filtered and generally arsed-around with makes digital video a jolly attractive proposition. (Just think - some clever bod could write a program that would search a film for frames made up of, say, more than 50 per cent flesh colours, and Bingo! Instant "rude bits" access.)

Get on with it

Anyway, enough of these sad, futuristic ramblings. If you want to watch films on your PC at the moment you are going to need an MPEG card. MPEG is a compression technique - invented by a bunch of bods called the Motion Picture

Expert Group - which enables video to be compressed down into manageable-sized levels.

The VideoGalaxy Oscar from Aztech is a low-priced card, which enables the playback of video, either as MPEG files, or complete movies in the form of Video CDs or CD-i films. The card itself is a 16-bit job, which fits into a standard ISA slot on your motherboard, connecting to the monitor using a video splitter cable and your graphics card via an internal feature connector.

Getting the thing up and running wasn't entirely hassle-free. As well as the usual IRQ and DMA conflicts, the card has a secondary IDE interface built in to enable a CD-ROM drive to be connected to it. After several hours of hair-pulling and teeth-gnashing, I realised that this interface was conflicting with the one already fitted to my machine. One jumper-change later, and the card was up and running.

Film to video

The software that comes with the VideoGalaxy is pretty straightforward, and consists of a player program, with

controls set out like a VCR. To play a Video CD, all you have to do is whack the CD in, click on a little icon and press "play". You can view the film in several different formats: full-screen, a kind of mini-TV thing, and in a window. Plus, you can capture stills as well as apply effects to the film as it's playing. Why you'd want to do the latter is beyond me, as they simply make the film look like the supposedly "trippy" bits in '70s editions of *Top of the Pops* - oh well.

Lossy pictures

The actual quality of the film playback is actually pretty good, although it's not as good as video. This is because, unlike the process used by PKZIP for example, MPEG is "lossy", which means that information tends to go missing during compression, which gives the output something of a "blocky" feel. This has got nothing to do with the card itself, however, and once installed, the VideoGalaxy worked a treat.

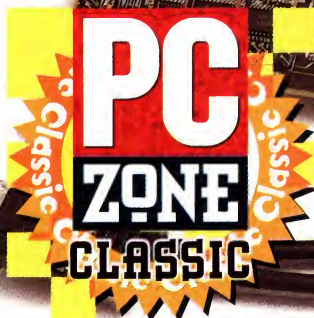
It's not easy to justify buying an MPEG card because they're not used by that many games, and the collection of films available on Video CD is limited. If you are interested in this technology, though (maybe you've got lots of "artistic" MPEG clips that you've downloaded from the Internet), then the VideoGalaxy more than does the job, and at this price it's well worth looking into. **Z**

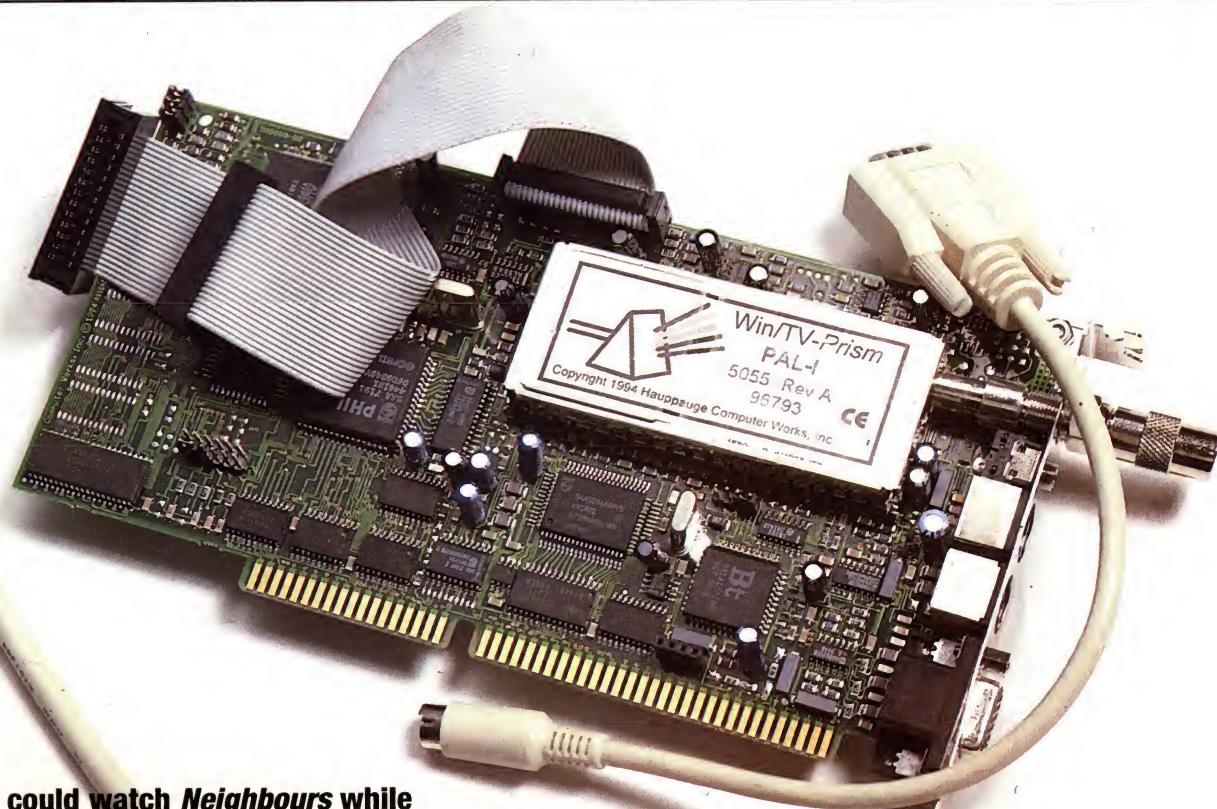
Score

90

A groovy MPEG card at a winning price.

Price: £169 exc. VAT
Release Date: Out now
Publisher: Aztech Tel: 01734 814121





Ever wished that you could watch *Neighbours* while pretending to do some work? God knows why we gave the easily-distracted **Dave Mathleson** this TV card to review...

Win/TV-Prism

WHILE MPEG CARDS THAT LET YOU watch all manner of video clips on your PC are becoming increasingly easy to get hold of, for mindless, round-the-clock action, you can't beat a bit of telly, and there are quite a few PC/TV hybrids around at the moment, from the likes of ICL/Fujitsu and Compaq. These boxes are all well and good if you've got the cash to fork out for a new system, but if you already have a perfectly good PC, you need to look elsewhere if you fancy watching *The Bill* while you work.

The Hauppauge Win/TV-Prism is a TV tuner that slots into your PC, and, by using the Windows software provided, you can watch all four channels to your heart's content. Connecting the card up is straightforward enough, and it plugs in to an external aerial via a standard socket, and to the graphics card via a feature connector – this is so that the TV picture can be overlaid on to the Windows screen. There is also an install disk that sets up the software.

When you run this software for the first time you have to tune the card in. This is done quite easily as there's a scan function. Once you've sorted this, you can configure the colour options. It's a shame that you can't control the

red, green and blue colours separately, as this would make "GrannyVision" (with the green turned all the way up) much easier to set up.

Abuse Alan Titchmarsh

The picture from the card is pretty good, although it's debatable whether it's as good as a TV costing the same amount. This isn't really the point, though, and the novelty of having a telly picture in a window, along with other programs, means that you'll keep coming back for more.

There is also a Teletext option, and you can set up a link so that, for example, you can import data into a spreadsheet. Now while this is probably of excellent use to budding stockbrokers (or just boring dickheads) who like looking at share prices all day, the rest of us would much rather look at Anne and Nick, so this feature is probably not that much use to anybody.

A more fun aspect of the Win/TV is the ability to grab screens from the telly. Combined with a decent paint package, you can prepare images of yourself stamping on Alan Titchmarsh's head, or gently running your hands through Noel Edmond's fashionable bouffant hairstyle.

Overall, then, the Win/TV card is quite an attractive product. It does everything that you'd expect it to do, as well as a couple of other things, and its price makes it a reasonable buy.

The only problem is, of course, that if you just wanted to watch a bit of telly, could you really be arsed to gather the whole family round the PC, with the fish and chips and start up Windows? Oh all right, this is probably a bit unfair. I suppose it's pretty cool. **Z**

Score

75

Telly under Windows? You'll never need to leave your bedroom again.

Price: £169 exc. VAT **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Hauppauge/ODT
Tel: 0171 378 7309

miroSOUND PCM10 & PCM1 pro

Ever wondered how Jean-Michel Jarre would have fared with a PC and a hundred quid or so? Dave Mathieson has a look at two low-priced sound cards for the budding diminutive-French-synth-god.

ALTHOUGH SOUND CARDS HAVE always been essential equipment for gamers, the growth of all things multimedia has meant that few PCs are without one these days. Of course, this same multimedia frenzy is largely just an excuse to fit a sound card and CD-ROM drive to play games in the first place. I mean, how many people sit around their PC with their kids, marvelling at some tossy multimedia encyclopaedia anyway? If your average TV ad is to be believed, anyone with a multimedia PC might as well not bother sending their children to school, as the little darlings will learn far more (and get bullied less) if they just sit at home, gawping at crappy little clips of plasticine dinosaurs, narrated by some crappy American actor who hasn't had any other work since a bit part in *Hawaii Five-O* in '73...

Hang on, when the editor said "Dave, can you review a couple of sound cards?", I somehow interpreted this as "Dave, can you rant on about something that's bothering you, in the style of an opinionated old fart who writes for one of the Sunday tabloids. We'll call your

column 'Dave Mathieson - The Voice of Arse'." However, as he didn't, I'd better get on with the review

The cards (Thank you, Ed.)

Anyway, sound cards are good for two things: playing games, and making music. To play games, you need SoundBlaster compatibility for the digital sound effects, and some kind of synth chip for the soundtrack. The PCM10 and the PCM1 pro cards from miro are both fully SoundBlaster-compatible, and, as they both contain wavetable technology in the form of the Yamaha OPL4 chip, they are capable of reproducing far more realistic instrument sounds than the cheesy rubbish that emanates from older cards. Wavetable chips sound better because they're based on samples of real instruments, whereas older cards had to manage by trying to build up the sounds from scratch.

Both cards come with install disks, and setting them up is the usual matter of selecting IRQs, DMAs and the like. The wavetable-ness of both cards made playing games most agreeable. The "real" instrument sounds make their mark on the soundtracks, with drums in

particular adding to the meatiness of the occasion, and the fact that both models are fitted with the same hardware in this department makes them indistinguishable on this count.

Where these two cards do differ is in the making-music department. Both cards come with a Windows mixer program, which allows you change the balance of the different inputs, but while the PCM10 has a line and microphone input, the PCM1 pro has an additional pair of stereo auxiliary inputs. All these, combined with an extra audio output and the fact that you can record and play back at the same time, make the pricier card a pretty handy "My First recording Studio"-type product. Using the mixer, you can play a MIDI file and combine this with the audio inputs, saving the whole lot as a wav file on your hard disk. This is pretty neat, especially if you're using a sequencer that can handle wav files directly. However, a



Score **PCM1 pro**

75

A decent enough sound card that's not quite as musician-friendly as it should be.

Price: £135 exc. VAT Release Date: Out now
Publisher: miro Tel: 01494 510 250

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more useful system for many musicians is, I suspect, being able to store samples on the card itself, as is possible on cards like the SoundBlaster AWE32 and Gravis Ultrasound Max, and this approach gives you more flexibility.

Both cards are very well constructed, and the sockets (and the end-plate itself) are gold plated, which gives a good contact for noise-free results. A sound card can never fully compete with professional audio equipment, however, as other PC components cause interference, but mounting the sound card as far away from these as possible can minimise noise. The PCM10 is likely to be of most interest to the gamer, and its wavetable chipset and build quality make it a real bargain. The PCM1 pro, while sharing these qualities, is not quite as useful for musical purposes as it first appears. However, the extra outputs mean that if you own lots of speakers, you can really show off, and it's price still makes it a good buy. **Z**

Score PCM10

89

An excellent budget wavetable card that'll make your PC sing.

**Price: £85 exc. VAT Release Date: Out now
Publisher: miro Tel: 01494 510 250**

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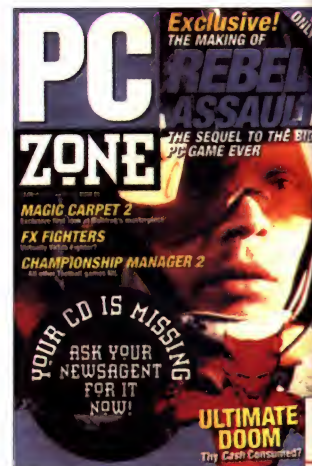


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MOST, IF NOT ALL, OF THE HACKS ON this page will require changing actual game files (mainly SAVEGAME files, peppered with the odd main .EXE file). It is sensible to back up the file specified in the hack. To do this, simply enter the directory containing the file, say for example, SAVEGAME.SAV, and back it up thus:

COPY SAVEGAME.SAV SAVEGAME.BAK

If you make a bad mistake and start crying and all, restore files by typing:

COPY SAVEGAME.BAK SAVEGAME.SAV

Hexadecimal

Your PC counts strangely – in hexadecimal (base 16). We humans count in decimal (base 10). For the HackMaster™ experience you only really need to learn a few choice hex numbers (see table to the left).

What you need

There are three things every HackMaster™ groupy must have (well, at least one of them):

1 DEBUG

Free with DOS is a program called *debug*. And a very useful program it is too, since it allows you to edit files of all descriptions and subtly change the data therein. It is the program we use most in the HackMaster Zone™, and since it

is the most user-unfriendly program on this planet, a brief introduction/explanation is necessary. Here's a step-by-step guide to a *debug* hack:

To run it, just type:

DEBUG

in the appropriate directory (i.e. the one mentioned in the hack blurb). It should run automatically and produce a little '>' prompt. If you get a "file not found" style error then your DOS path hasn't been set properly. Refer to the MSDOS manual and remember the bottom line – don't ring us (no matter how desperate/suicidal you are) unless it's TruePlayer™ Tips day.

2 A DISK SECTOR EDITOR

Another useful bit of kit is a Disk Sector Editor, such as XTree Gold or PC Tools. If you own one, then you'll know how to use it – but it is important to note that the offset (or address) in a *debug* hack is for *debug*, which automatically adds 256 bytes (or 100 hex) to the address. So, if you prefer to use your editor, and a separate disk editor hack isn't included, then you just deduct 100 hex from the address. Therefore, if an address is 0141 on the page, then your address will be 0041. It's a simple case of deducting one from the second figure on the left. If in doubt, use *debug*.

3 UNP

UNP is a highly useful shareware utility by Ben Castrichum.

Many games about these days have compressed .EXE files, which make debugging and sector editing absolutely impossible.

Enter UNP in a second, by typing:

UNP <filename>

You can expand the .EXE file to its proper size and hack it to bits. It causes no damage to your files (and besides, you will have backed them up anyway, right?). Full instructions are included with each hack.

HEX	DECIMAL
09H	09
0AH	10
0FH	15
10H	16
20H	32
28H	40
32H	50
40H	64
63H	99
64H	100
C8H	200
FAH	250
FFH	255



Warcraft – Orcs and Humans

Warcraft is a brilliant game, which you will want to return to again and again. Unfortunately, the game doesn't give level codes, which would enable you to jump to any battle, so you will be forced to play through the nursery levels each time to get to the later, more interesting scenarios – unless, of course, you use the following brilliant cheat codes!

To enable the Cheat Mode, first load up and select a new game. When the main battle screen is displayed, press Return to get the message prompt – MSG:

Enter the Master Cheat Code –
Corwin of Amber

To enable the following cheats, again press Return to get the message prompt, then enter –

ORC/ HUMAN****

This will jump you to the level you wish to play (e.g. ORC12).

YOURS TRULY takes you to the victory graphics (after a short time delay).

CRUSHING DEFEAT takes you to the defeat graphics.

IDES OF MARCH takes you to the game's final sequence of the current campaign.

POT OF GOLD adds 10,000 gold and 5,000 lumber to your account.

EYE OF NEWT upgrades all of your magic users with all spells.

IRON FORGE upgrades all weapon technology immediately.

SALLY SHEARS reveals all of the map.

HURRY UP GUYS speeds up all building, and training.

THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE Makes your men invulnerable, except by a direct catapult hit. It also gives them a 255 hitting force.

Quarantine

Level 1 **OMNICORP IS ALL KNOWING**

Level 2 **KEEP THE OPPRESSOR OPPRESSING**

Level 3 **THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT ZILCH**

Level 4 **HAVE YOU HAD YOUR HYDERGINE TODAY?**

Level 5 **KEMO CITY A NICE PLACE TO VISIT**

SimTower

Establish just how much cash you have in your account by visiting the Finance



(Far left) *Warcraft* has proved to be very popular, and we've gone and got all of the cheats for you.

(Left) *Terminal Velocity*... is this game about to take the world by storm?

Window (this is shown in the Info Window). Your actual cash will be shown as the number divided by 100. Convert this number into hex. Edit your SAVEGAME file and search for the reverse of this hex number (e.g. 2,000 in cash is hex 7D0 – reversed = D007, 50,000 cash is C350 – reversed = 50C3).

Having found the string of characters in the file, you could change the figures to **00 94 35 77** to give you the staggering lottery win of two million dollars

Jazz Jackrabbit

Foolish folks do say that a rabbit's foot is lucky – so how come it doesn't seem to work for rabbits when they've got four of them, then?

If your unlucky rabbit can't seem to get his tail up, here's a bunch of cheat codes which will put some fluff into your bunny.

GUNHED gives you all weapons.

BOUF makes you invincible.

SABLE gives superfast speed.

CSTRIKE gives you a hoverboard.

DOOM makes everything just that bit harder.

KEN jumps you out of the game to DOS.

MARK makes you very dead!

BAD gives you the bird.

LAMER skips the current level.

HOCUS random teleport.

CHECK debug Mode.

ARJAN says "HAHAHA".

TIM says "AWESOME".

NOTE: In some versions you must add "DD" in front of the cheat code.

Power Drive

If you want to increase your starting cash in this game, edit the file

PDRIVE.EXE and search for the string of characters:

30 30 30 32 38 30 30 30 FF

Change the above characters to:

39 39 39 39 39 39 39 39 FF

and you'll have maximum cash.

MicroProse Colonisation

If there is one variable in MicroProse *Colonisation* that can change the whole nature of the game it is the start date. Once you have begun to play, note the date, then save. Edit the SAVEGAME file and search for the date. (Note this will be the reverse of the data in hex – e.g. the year 1555 is 06 13 in hex, which when reversed is 13 06.) Enter a replacement date using the same conversion formula. Now when you reload the game you'll find that you can play much longer games, and you'll get loads of points for early revolution.

The Lost Vikings

Levels	World
1-4	Spaceship
5-11	Caverns
12-17	Egypt
18-25	Machine
26-33	Wacky
34-36	Spaceship Revisited
37	Tomato

Terminal Velocity

trigods	invincible
maniacs	afterburner
trishld	full shields
trinext	next level
trifir 0-9	weapons (0 is invincibility), (9 is afterburner)
triburn	terminal velocity
trframe	frame counter



(Far left) *Quarantine* has some of the longest type-in cheats ever.

(Centre left) Increase your cash in *Power Drive*.

(Left) Swap worlds in *The Lost Vikings*.



Discworld

ACTION THE WARDROBE TO TAKE the pouch. Go to the Arch Chancellor's room and talk until he sends you to get the book. Go to the closet on the bottom level and get the broom. Operate the broom on the chest in your room. Now go to the library and give the banana from inside the chest to the librarian. Talk to the librarian to get book. Give book to the Arch Chancellor. Go to the Dining Room and operate the broom on Windle Poon's staff. Talk to the apprentice wizard in the grounds until he gives up the secret of the doors. Get the frog that appears. Go to gate and operate it.

Move to the Square on the map. Pick up tomato and throw it at tax collector. Pick up another tomato. Pick up worm which falls to the ground. Speak to urchin to get the pick-pocket trick. Use the trick to get bloomers from old men. Enter the door behind Dibbler and talk

to Troll. Leave room then return. Once Troll has moved to another seat, pick up butterfly net. Go to the Alley on the map. Use the spring to reach the roof. Go left and dislodge ladder. Exit roof via window. Go to the Palace and talk to guards until they let you in. Go to room with star on the door and get mirror. Go to the rear of the University and pick up bag. Put the net into your inventory, then use the ladder on the window. Go to window and use the net to catch the pancake. Go to the kitchen and get the pan and banana. Go to the Street and enter the hairdressers. Look at the hair-roller then talk to the woman. When the hairdresser removes the roller and puts it in his pocket, talk to him. When the hairdresser daydreams use the pick-pocket skill on his pocket to get the roller. Get the picture from the Fish-monger's. Go left to the Toy Shop. Get string from Toy Shop counter. Use the string on the worm. Go to the Livery Stable (bottom right). Get corn from sack. Return to the Alley and, bypassing the spring, enter the Alchemist. Talk to Alchemist. Look at camera. Use camera release switch to reveal imp. Use corn on the flask. Try to get imp. Use the worm on the hole outside to get imp. Put mirror in Rincewind's inventory. Get onto roofs. Move to the tower. Use mirror on the tip of the flagpole. Use the mirror to attract dragon and get his breath. Return to Chancellor and hand over all five items. Enter the Lair on the map (situated bottom left). Collect Gold.



Note

"Action", "Use" or "Operate" means you have to double-click left mouse button. "Look" means double-click right mouse button.

ACT II

Go to the library and look at the banana in the sleazy guy's ear. Use the banana icon to talk to the guy. Give all of the gold to get the banana. Give the banana to the librarian to reveal l-space. Enter l-space and follow thief through bookshelves to the Hideout on the map (near the dragon's lair). Knock on door. In the Park, use the frog on sleeping Rincewind's mouth. Use the net to catch the butterfly. Go to the corner of the street where the monk stands and use the butterfly on the lamp to make it rain in the future. Travel through l-space to the Broken Drum Inn and look at the counterwise wine on the shelf. Talk to the barman. Get glass (not tankard) and matches off the bar. Go to the alley beside the Fish Shop and get the robe. Return through l-space to the hideout. Operate the drainpipe beside the door, then hide behind fence. When thief arrives, use glass on drainpipe. Use robe to enter Hideout.

Go back through l-space to Broken Drum and talk to scared guy. Go to the Inn, enter bedroom and get sheet. Go through l-space to Inn and use sheet.

(Below) Remember to use the keg on the fireplace before using the string on the keg.





(Far left) Go on, go through the door... go through the door.

(Left) What's Magnon from *FX Fighter* doing here?

(Below) These guys have got to be useful for something.

Operate the scared guy. Go to Troll's shop in the Street and take pot. Go through l-space to Broken Drum and speak to scared guy to find out about hammer. Return via l-space to Inn and use sheet. Operate scared guy to get gate pass. Go to City Gates and operate pass on guard. Go to the mountains to collect egg and feather. Go to the witch's house in the dark wood and use the pot on the cauldron to get custard. Go to the Edge of the World (on the horizon). Operate the coconut tree. Use the net to get nut. Go to the Barn. Get screwdriver from the wall and use it on the coconut. Talk to Street Urchin about secret handshakes. Go to Psychiatrist to get two inkblots. Go to the Palace and use an inkblot on guard. Talk with peasant in the queue. Go to the University Kitchen and get cornflour. Go through l-space and read the graffiti on the inside of the toilet door next to the fish shop. Enter the Shades and talk with Big Sally at the House. Give flour, egg and coconut milk to Sally and you will receive new bloomers. Return through l-space and give new bloomers to Urchin in exchange for a bra and the secret handshake. Go to the Shades and use the handshake on the mason to get the trowel.

Donuts, prunes and custard

Get a donut from Dibbler in the Square. Go to the Dunnyking Machine behind Dibbler and give the donut to the dunnyman. Go to the Psychiatrist and talk with girl to get note. Go to the hairdresser and give him the note. Use the apparatus to get the tooth.

Go to the Shades, find the Hovel. Use the bra with the ladder, then use the ladder with the hovel. Pretend to go for the key, then use the feather on the thief. Get the key. Exit hovel and get the ladder. Go through l-space to the Broken Drum. Look at the picture behind the "little guy". Operate his glass. Go outside and use the ladder on the shingle over the door. Get the drumstick. Go to the University Dining Room and use the drumstick on the gong. Go to the lily pond and get the bag of prunes. Go to



the Fishmonger's and use the string on the octopus. Use the pot of custard on the toilet, then operate the octopus on the toilet. Use the prunes on the caviar in the fishmongers. Get belt from under toilet door.

Go to the rear of the University and get garbage can. Go to the Palace and use inkblot on guard. Use garbage can on Fool. Enter bathroom and use bubble bath on the bath. Get the cap. Go to Toy shop and get doll. Go to City Gates and open the crate. Get the firecrackers and keg. Put doll in Rincewind's inventory. Go to the roof above the alley and use the doll on the Alchemist's chimney. Enter Alchemist's house and use the keg on the fireplace. Use the string on the keg. Leave house and use the matches on the fuse in the hole. Go to the Barn and give all six gold items to the dragon. Go to the Square and speak with Nanny. After you have got the carpet, look at Custard book. Talk to Nanny and when she tries to kiss you, get the book. Go through l-space and get the Dragon Book from the shelf. (It's just to the right of the l-space exit.) Use the Custard Book on the Dragon Book to change folders.

Operate the new Dragon Book back onto the empty shelf for the thief to find.

Worms, leaches and rats

Go to the Hideout and use the knocker to get a custard tart. Go to the Alchemist and talk with him until he leaves. Take the camera. Go to the Livery Stable then look at the bumper bar. Look at the bumper sticker to get the Dragon Sanctuary address. Go to the Dragon Sanctuary on the main map and use the door knocker. Go to the rear of the house and talk with the lady. Go to the front door and again use the knocker. Go to rear of house and take the rosette, leash and the nail that the leash hung on. Go to the Broken Drum. Look at the drinks on the shelf to see cactus juice. Talk to barman to get drink. Get the glass to obtain the worm. Go to Dibbler to get paper bag. Operate the bag to get leaches. Go to Palace and use leaches on the guard. Enter the Dungeon at Palace rear and find the mouse hole. Use the worm on the hole. Operate on the rat to reveal an imp. Use the imp on the camera. Go to the Witch's Cottage. Look at the potions behind her then talk to »



her using the potion icon. When she waits for a kiss, use the custard tart on Rincewind. Take the potion. Operate on the wool to find the sheep. Use the rosette on the sheep, then use the camera on the sheep. Get the mallet beside the hatch. Go to the Drum and use the nail on the beam beside the bar. Use the sheep's photo on the octopus picture. Use the new picture on the nail. Talk to the braggart. Use the potion on the braggart's drink.

Go to the Gorge (outside the city gates). Use the carpet on the bridge. Enter the Temple. Use the leash on the luggage. Take the bandanna from the hatstand and use it on Rincewind. Use the pouch on the sand (to right of altar). Use the pouch on the eye.

Dog and bone

Go to the Woods (directly outside city gates - NOT the Dark Woods). Use the crank on the Wishing Well. Use the pot on the bucket. Go to the Inn and use the pot on the soap in the bathroom. Go to the Palace and use the paper bag on the guard. Get the brush from the bath and use it on the pot of water. Go to the Livery Stable. Use the brush on the bumper bar. Look at the bumper to see the number (Sore Ass). Enter the Shades and use the ladder to enter the Hovel. Open the bag and get the knife. Put the knife in Rincewind's inventory. Leave Hovel, pick up ladder, and go to the roof above the Alley. Use the knife to cut the ladder free. Talk to the assassin and,

providing you read the bumper bar, you will respond with the "Sore Ass" answer. Go to the Hairdressers and get the scissors. Go to the Square and use the scissors on the donkey's tail to get the moustache. Try to get an egg from the stall then pick up the snake. Go to the Palace Dungeon and get a bone from the skeleton on the far right. Go to the Toy Shop and use the bone on the glue pot. Go to the Inn and use the bone on the dog. Look at the sailor's tattoos then talk to him. Get a Drink from the barman. Look at the tattoos again then talk to the sailor 'til he gives you his Whistle.

Go to the closet at the University and use the matches on the shape. Get the packet. Use the fertiliser and the starch on the snake, then use the result on Windle Poons' staff. Go to the Arch Chancellor's office and get the hat. Use the broom handle on the net. Go to the Edge of the World and use the whistle on Rincewind. Operate the firecrackers to get one. Use the firecracker on the matches, then use it on the parrot. Use the net to get the parrot. Return to the sailor and operate the parrot on him. Return to the Edge of the World and look at the hat to see the rabbit. Get the lamp. Use the hat on the fork. Use the chain of handkerchiefs to climb down to the glinting object. Get the whistle. Return to the sailor and give him the whistle. Go to the hairdresser shop and get the little book. Go to the room behind Dibbler and talk with everyone. Leave and return. (Repeat this until the

Troll moves.) Talk to the girl until she mentions autographs. Use the book on the girl. Go to the Wishing Well and use the book on the hairdresser. Go to the hairdresser shop and talk with him. Go and speak to the Street Urchin. Go to the Dunnyking machine and use the knife on the rubber belt. Put the belt in Rincewind's inventory and then climb the tower via the roofs. Use the band on the flagpole tip.

Go to the library and find a magic book near where the sleazy guy stood. Go to the kitchen and get the spatula. Go to the Shades and use the spatula on the wall mural. Go to the wishing well and use the screwdriver on the crank. Use the crank on the racks in the Dungeon to get sword. Talk to Carrot at the City Gates, then go through and enter the Mine. Talk with the dwarves and operate the sword on the Smithy. Go to the Drum and talk with the Barman. Go to the Inn and open the door. Look at the door to find the Bogeyman. Talk to the Bogeyman. Use the screwdriver on the Bogeyman. Talk again with Bogeyman until he leaves. Go to the Drum and enter the cellar via the trapdoor. Look at the barrels until you find Elderberry. Use the tankard on the Elderberry barrel, then return to the Smithy in the mines. Now operate the tankard on the Smithy and then operate the sword on him.

Final Act

Go to the Square and get the key from Lady Rainkin. Go to her estate and open the dragon's cage with the key. Walk quickly through the cage and pick up Mambo. Return to the Square and stand before the dragon. Look at Mambo. Use a lit firecracker on Mambo. Operate the large dragon, and Mambo will miss his shot. Leave the Square then return and stand before the large dragon. Use the custard tart on the dragon. The dragon then flies off into the sunset. **Voila Z**

(Above) Bloody hell... fancy meeting you here.

(Right) She has to be important. Hmm, but is her knitting?

(Far right) Ankh Morpork in all its seedy and disgusting glory.



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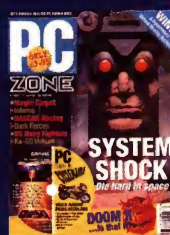
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Here's a listing of the most recent issues.



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- HD version (AW20A)
- Master of Magic
- CD version (AW20A/C)
- The UltraSound Experience; demo's from Cyclemania, Battle Bugs and more.

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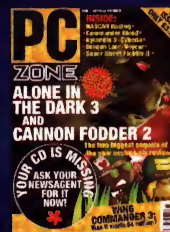
December 94

- HD version (AW21A)
- System Shock
- Doom II Level Editor
- CD version (AW21A/C)
- Doom levels plus some for Doom II; demo of DeltaV, Transport Tycoon plus loads more.



January 95

- HD version (AW22A)
- Discworld
- CD version (AW22A/C)
- Cyberwar, Creature Shock, Magic Carpet demo and more.



February 95

- HD version (AW23A)
- Cannon Fodder 2
- CD version (AW23A/C)
- U.S. Navy Fighters, Discworld, King's Quest 7, Noctropolis and more



March 95

- HD version (AW24A)
- Kick Off 3: European Challenge
- CD version (2 CDs) (AW24A/C)
- Demo of Alone 3, Heretic, The Lion King plus more Fully running version of OS/2 Warp



April 95

- HD version (AW25A)
- XCOM-Terror from the Deep
- CD version (AW25A/C)
- The final Doom showdown, demos such as Jungle Strike, Inferno, MetalTech.



May 95

- HD version (AW26A)
- Pyrotechnica
- CD version (AW26A/C)
- demo of BioForge, Lost Eden, Rise of the Triad, Orion Conspiracy, Full Throttle



June 95

- HD version (AW27A)
- Baldies and Virtual Pool
- CD version (AW27A/C)
- Star Trek: The Next Generation interactive demo, plus demos of Slipstream 5000, Warriors and loads more.



July 95

- HD version (AW28A)
- Jagged Alliance
- CD version (AW28A/C)
- playable demos of Alien Bree: Tower Assault, Braindead 13 and Kingdom: The Far Reaches plus a round up of action demos

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ZONE

ON-LINE

This month: Wow at the groovy new graphics front end for dullo DOS-based BBS's; gasp as the UberFragMeister takes on the Americans (and wins – hooray); lose control of your bladder as the latest cool files are rounded up by The Ponce; and evaluate, rather scientifically, the performance rates of the various archive programs in the world.

WORLDGROUPS

Step tentatively? (no). Definitely? (yes) into the next phase of Bulletin Boarding. Welcome to the Windows 95 ready front-end for Major BBS's.

WE ALL KNOW THE INTERNET IS HUGE, COMPUSEIVE IS expensive, and CIX is cute. And we also know these are well-organised, snazzy looking, spiffo modem hot-spots. But beyond the Internet, underneath CompuServe, and well above CIX is the largely ignored and unhyped world of local Bulletin Board systems. We've all logged on to BBS's in our time. Some are crap, small-time local ones. Others are cultish, dealing in the slightly macabre interests of certain people (hem). Some are erected for technical support. Some you can play *Doom* on. And others are well-organised, well-designed and exhaustive reservoirs of excellent files, downloadables and demos. Big London BBS's, such as *Gates of the Underworld* and *Minerva*, offer the enlightened modem user a cheap, easy alternative to spending hours searching the World Wide Web for information and downloadables. But, but, but BBS's skulk in the shadow of the big three because the big three have their fancy Graphical User Interfaces, their poncey off-line readers, and their oh-so-fancy HTML front ends. BBS's are terminally text based (pun intended). And that's not very 90s, is it?

Until now. Galacticomm, previous purveyor of house-sized serial cards and the seminal Major BBS software, has released *WorldGroups* – a Windows-based front-end for compatible BBS's. Taking an on-line WinCim kind of approach, *WorldGroups* is an

object-oriented, pointy/clicky affair, which takes the tedium out of BBS. The endless garish ANSI screens... memorising globals commands... scrolling through reams of files etc., etc. It also offers simultaneous uploading and downloading of files, multiple simultaneous file downloading, fully threaded conferences, and easier-than-the-toilet file access. Let's have a quick walkthrough.

WELL...?

WorldGroups is a pretty major innovation in grass-root BBSing, and not coincidentally timed in its Windows 95 compatibility. It has neat features, usability and friendliness. It even updates itself if you connect to an advanced server. However, it has faults too, though. Its download/upload panels are empty of information (no CPS ratings, no disk space remaining indicators), and the whole thing has a horrible, sticky American feel to it ("How much does your company earn in US Dollars?" says the Registry questionnaire). Also, the ichnography is a bit non-standard and takes some getting used to. But, but, but it'll make any BBS instantly accessible and appealing, and it'll give any Internet front end, WinCim-type application, or chunk of terminal software a run for its money. Try it out.

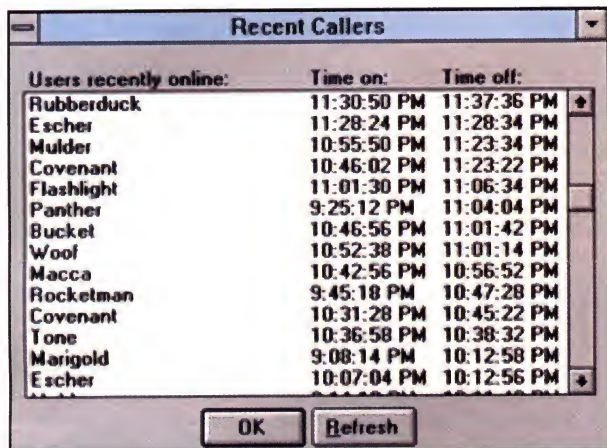
WORLDGROUPS

Also, for future-proofing type stuff, *WorldGroups* supports ISDN-sized transfer rates and direct network connections (for Sysops generally). It stores your username and remembers your password, logging both in to the system as you connect, saving you the hassle of having to remember your girlfriend's name (or whatever you use as a password).

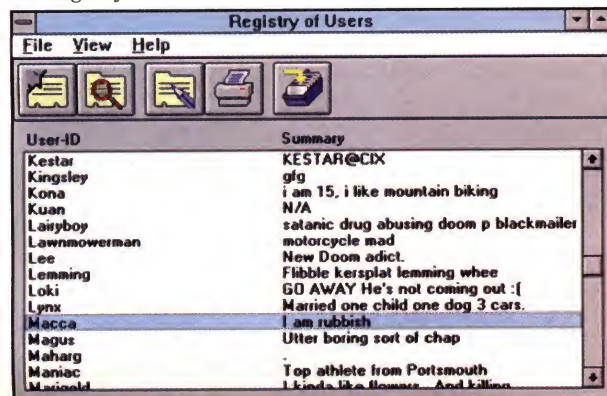
WorldGroups, thankfully, supports initialisation strings and set-ups for most popular modems, up to and including the more esoteric Taiwanese models, which proliferate these days.

WALKTHROUGH

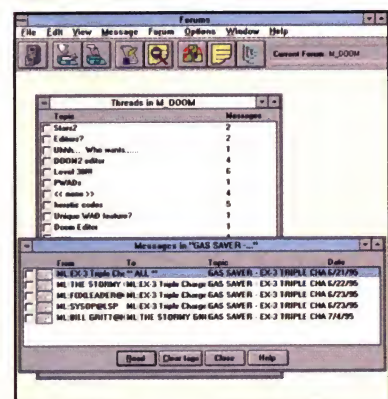
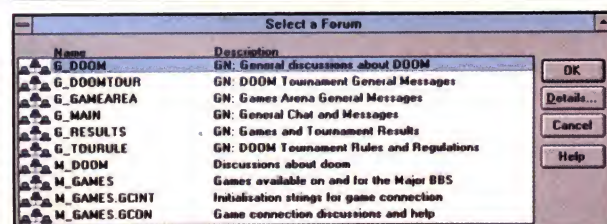
This is the main screen. From here you access all the traditionally widdly bits of BBS's, namely e-mail, conferences and file libraries. All these are simply a mouse-click-on-a-cute-icton away. If you're feeling nosy and just want to see who's



around for a fragging, a recent users list is available, listing the log ons and offs of your BBS-ing chums. You can also see who else is on line with you and use the word "cool" on them. If you're really nosy, you can dip into the User Registry and pull out the personal details of any user who's bothered to fill in a registry form.

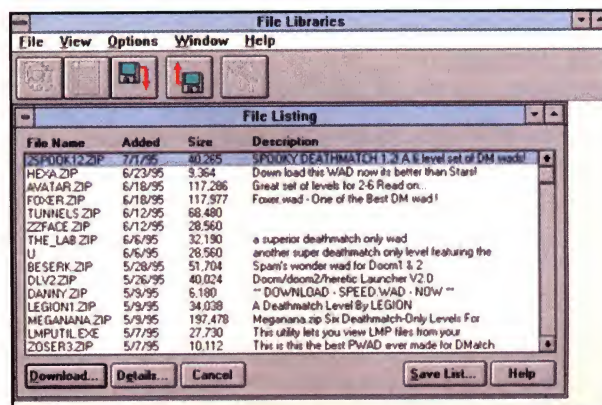


FORUMS



The main aspect of WorldGroups is its message base and conference support. The typical BBS system for browsing message is crap, let's face it; skirting through each message one at a time, threads all over the place, can't see who's replied to whom etc, etc. WorldGroups, however, neatly lists

the forums for you. You delve in; it lists the threads. Delve further and you see the message buried within. Delve yet further and the glorious Americanised junkmail appears for your delectation. The main advantage with this is that WorldGroup BBS's can link up pan-globally in a Usenet kind of way, so you can send your excellent British wit to a bunch of unsuspecting fat Americans and see how they react. "Manty Pythan - cool."

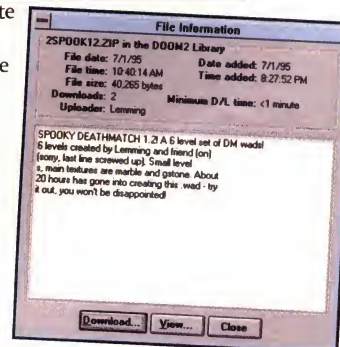


LIBRARIES

File libraries are simplicity-incarnate to access under WorldGroups.

Click on the library list, click on the library, and then click on the file for more details.

How many times has this file been downloaded? you may wonder. Hmmm, I wonder who uploaded it? you muse. How long will it take to download? you mumble to yourself? All the details are there, plus a full file description and other stuff for you to ignore.



TECH SPECS

WorldGroups by Galacticom (Shareware)

Find it on this month's coverdisk. BBS's have to have been upgraded to WorldGroups if you want to use the GUI interface. Check with the Sysop to see if your local BBS supports it.

DOWNLOAD TIMES

(approximately in mins)

File size	9.6K	14.4K	28.8K
10K	00:10	00:07	00:03
50K	00:53	00:35	00:17
100K	01:46	01:11	00:35
250K	04:26	03:00	01:28
500K	08:33	05:58	02:53
1MB	18:05	12:05	06:12
2MB	36:00	24:00	15:05

Note: download times vary massively depending on the quality of your phone line, the speed of your UART/Serial port, and the compressability of the file.

COOL FILES

A brief monthly round up of the coolest files around. Your host, the pugilistic, nay loquacious ponce – **The Ponce.**

GENERALLY SPEAKING

OUR PRELIMINARY YET COMPREHENSIVE ROUND-UP OF THE coolest game-add ons, levels, wads and updates last month has left a void, a paucity of new files to cover. Summer exams haven't helped. All the students, sixth formers and graduates who form the vertebrae of the spine of cool files have disappeared into libraries the world over. Witness, then, a new *Dark Forces* level editor for Windows (DFEDIT.ZIP by Sean Baker,



83,247 bytes), which will allow you to add new enemies or objects to existing levels. A little dull, admittedly, after spending weeks rendering your bedroom in *Doom-o-Vision*, but flexible enough to pass to your smug *Dark Forces*

friend and scrub the grin off his face with a few well-placed *Dark Troopers*. Don Sielke's gone a little further with his duo of new levels, the imaginatively titled "Don's Levels" (DONDF22.ZIP 88704). He's modelled these from scratch and added an astromech Droid and moving Tie Fighters in the landing bay. Find it on this month's CD coverdisk. Simon also used the latest incarnation of DFUSE (V 1.0, DFUSE100.EXE, 1072330), an amateur developers kit featuring graphics extractions, randomisers, wav replacers, and an entire, fully-featured level editor for Windows.

Heretic still seems quite popular for the glorified PWAD that it is. iD Software has released a patch for the registered version, updating from version 1.0 to 1.2 (10_12RHP.EXE, 448,889 bytes). There's no details as to what it does, but again, save yourself the download by scanning this month's CD. And, while your at it, have a go with Elandsoft's BOOM 4 (BOOM4.ZIP 8,579 bytes), the most recent in a series of HHE files



(DEHACKED for *Heretic*). It adds new enemies, some new weapons (including a bonfire projector) and player decoys for deathmatch.

Any down points? Just the one; you'll need HHE.EXE to run it.

SEND YOUR WAD

Designed a wad? Constructed a new *Dark Forces* level? Made some new weapons for *Heretic*? Or even just not got bored with *Descent*? Good. Send them in and The Ponce will cast his jaundiced eye over the spoils of your disk. Or, if you've found a cool file on some far-flung corner of the Internet, then grab that and send it in. You may win a prize if it's especially cool. Send, send, send to:

COOL FILES, PC ZONE, 19 BOLSOVER STREET, LONDON, W1P 7HY.

DOOMWATCH

Take a journey into the realm of modem-gaming, of frags and first to 50s, of **UberFragMeisters and UberFraginfantas**

It is quiet on the *Doom* front. Tournaments rise and fall. Champions win and lose. Ladders are erected and then collapse in an amusing Laurel and Hardy fashion. The big four multi-playing BBS's go on – Gamesnet London, Gamesnet Cardiff, The Games BBS, and The Forest.

Last month, we proudly boasted that the UberFragMeister would be taking on John Romero, the programmer of *Doom*, and reputedly the best deathmatch player in the galaxy (and so he should be). Frantic trans-Atlantic telephone calls were made. Flurries of e-mail went back and forth. Romero said he couldn't play direct but would play on the Dallas DWANGO (*Doom* World-Wide Area Network Gaming Organisation). Dwango systems – there are 14 in the States – allow up to 64 players to log on, and play deathmatch epics, and chat. For reconnaissance purposes only, of course, the FragMeister logged on to DWANGO for a quick warm up.

LAST DWANGO IN DALLAS

Dwango Dallas. Excited and dribbling slightly at the thought of kicking some loud-mouthed, day-glo American butt. It's 5.50pm in the US.

12:02 After multiple false starts and bad connects, the Meister logs on as PCZONEMG and enters DWANGO proper (he would have logged on under "Macca" but somebody had already used the name – bastard).

12:03 First impression of DWANGO is "What the...?" The main screen is incredibly busy. A section along the top lists the players on line (there are 16), showing the speed of their machine (the Meister's machine clocked 168Mhz, the highest one there – strike one for the UK); what version of *Doom* everybody is playing (everybody is playing *Doom2* v1.9); and other useless information. The bottom of the screen is the "foyer" where people chat.

12:10 After repeated calls of "Help?" "Hello you thick American scum," and "Yo y'all," (we are in Dallas, after all), somebody finally asks me who I am. The following conversation is not made up.

HUNKIE: Hi. PCZONEMG? That has to be the hardest handle yet.

CHEWIE: I like big sailors called Sam.

HUNKIE: What does it mean?

PCZONEMG: It stands for *PC Zone* magazine: a games magazine from the UK.

MEATHEAD: The UK – what a shit-hole.

PCZONEMG: Can anybody help me? What do I do?

HUNKIE: Never heard of it.

MEATHEAD: No. Go away.

CHEWIE: I like Liz Hurley.

HUNKIE: Yeah, Liz Hurley is cool. Are all UK girls like that?

PCZONEMG: I wanna play *Doom*. How do I do it?

CHEWIE: You can't play *Doom*.

PCZONEMG: Poo sticks.

HUNKIE: Hehehehe. Poo sticks. Hehehe.

MEATHEAD: (Living up to his name) Poo sticks! Poo Sticks!

EVILGRIN: Yeah, go away, Brit.

PCZONEMG: You guys are really funny. Script writers for *Letterman*, right?

HUNKIE: You need to start a team. Enter my team.

CHEWIE: Yeah, Poo sticks.

12:18 Hunkie (for it is he) starts a team called US vs UK. On creating a team you give it a name, decide what settings you want (level, deathmatch 1 or 2, skill etc.) and then you can set a minimum of players and exclude players with slower machines than you. Cool.

12:20 The Meister enters US vs UK team along with EvilGrin. The game starts. It is unbelievably jerky and they're playing DeathMatch version 2. Not good. The transatlantic connection is bad, and the Meister suffers accordingly, coming second in a 30-frag game with 26.

12:40 The players quit out.

HUNKIE: Yeah! Strike one for the US.

PCZONEMG: Er, Vietnam?

EVILGRIN: Hmmm.

PCZONEMG: If it was a smooth connect, I could take you easily.

HUNKIE: Yeah?

EVILGRIN: Yeah?

PCZONEMG: Yeah?!

12:45 The Meister notices EvilGrin's status is VIP. Hunkie has left, gone, no doubt, to oil his AK-47 assault rifle and chat to his militia chums.

PCZONEMG: How come you're VIP EvilGrin?

EVILGRIN: I won the tourney.

PCZONEMG: Yeah? Cool. Did Romero play?

EVILGRIN: Nope, but I've played him before.

PCZONEMG: No way! Did you win?

EVILGRIN: Thrashed him.

PCZONEMG: Cool. Wanna play head to head then?

EVILGRIN: Sure.

PCZONEMG: Direct?

EVILGRIN: Sure.

12:50 The Meister and the Dallas DWANGO Champion exchange numbers. Excitement mounts. Calls are made. The first call is at 14400 and the game is unbelievably jerky. We try again at 9600. It's slow but playable. EvilGrin says he doesn't mind playing on. We play on.

01:15 The Meister takes the Dallas DWANGO King 30-29 in a tough game, hampered by very slow response time and choppy play. The Dallas DWANGO King enters a "huff".

EVILGRIN: That was unplayable.

PCZONEMG: You said it was alright.

EVILGRIN: You snipe too much.

PCZONEMG: Hey hey. You'll be saying I killed you too much next.

EVILGRIN: Still, I'd win a smooth game.

PCZONEMG: I don't think so.

Evilgrin hangs up.

Oh dear. Not very good losers are they, these American bods?

Anyway, the moral of the story is, if you want jerky choppy play and endless "witty" conversation with dumbo Yanks, and a phone bill from Satan's very bottom, then dial up DWANGO (the software ships with most recent versions of *Doom* and *Heretic*). If, however, you want quality play, quality humour, and cheaper calls, stick to the local BBS.

REGULAR DOOM TOURNIES

SubCyberia Cafe in Whitfield Street, central London, beneath the media-drenched floor of the *Cyberia Internet Cafe* is hosting regular games tournaments every Saturday.

The plan is to run *Doom2* every week alongside other hot new network games, such as *Descent*, *Hi-Octane*, *Magic Carpet*, and *Rise of the Triads*. SubCyberia has seven networked DX2-66s and a large sound system. Entry costs £1. Prizes are on hand, so is coffee and soft drinks.

Ring 0181 813 1926. Nearest tube is Goodge Street.

BANK HOLIDAY HEAD TO HEADS

Bored of spending the August bank holiday eating Opal Fruits with your nuclear family in a traffic jam, somewhere on the M4? Fed up with the totally tedious shower of obnoxious relatives descending on your house just because they don't have to go to work on Monday? Good. Head, instead, down to a hotel in Bristol and take part in a three-day long head-to-head tourney, featuring *Falcon 3*, *Pacific Air War*, and *Descent* multi-player.

The UK Falcon3 Challenge Ladder in association with the H2H BBS and Squadron XIII is organising a three-day carnival of carnage for the 26th, 27th and 28th August '95. The itinerary is as follows:

SATURDAY 26th

Pacific Air War tourney. Network dog-fights. Death. And failed ejector seats. Sponsored by MicroProse.

SUNDAY 27th

The Big One. *Falcon 3* networked. pilots from all over the UK will compete for The British Falcon Test Pilot Champion 1995. Gosh. Sponsored by Thrustmaster, Spectrum Holobyte, *Enemy Lock-On* magazine, and Flying Muffin Enterprise.

MONDAY 28th

Eight-player *Descent* tournament for the title British *Descent* Champion 1995. Prizes. Fame. Girls.

Organisers Dom "Killerz" Silk and Leo "Badboy" Smith have arranged with the hotel for competitors to spend two nights and three days (with full English breakfast) for a mere £50. Only prob is, deadline for pre-registration was 31st July. Oh well. Still, if you want more details, a registration form and all that, e-mail the boys on CompuServe (CIS) IDs:

Killerz 100276,2726

Badboy 100116,1742

Yo Soul Man! **Z**



GAMES SERVERS

Gamesnet

01222 362361

Cardiff (9 lines)

Gamesnet

0171 460 0515

London (16 lines)

The Games BBS

0181 561 3242

London (12 lines)

The Forest

01425 629629

Hampshire (12 lines)

Although you can connect with normal comms software (8-N-1) you'll need a program called SIRD00M.ZIP to play *Doom* multi-player. You can download it, or, more sensibly, simply install it from this month's coverdisk.

BUYERS' GUIDE

Welcome to the all-singing, all-dancing **PC Zone Buyers Guide**, which is to gaming what the BR timetable is to trainspotters. You name it, it's here – painstakingly compiled by our very own engine driver.

Issue 3 – June 1993

DJ Puff

(62) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99
Okay, but it looks like an 8-bit console game.

Dogfight

(50) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Far too easy, major flight model discrepancies and grass can kill you. All in all, a pile of jobs.

International Athletics

(55) Zeppelin Games – Sport £9.99
Fun as far as it goes, which isn't far.

International Rugby Challenge

(67) Domark – Sport £34.99
Scores a try, but doesn't quite manage the conversion.

Serpent Isle: Ultima VII Part Two

(89: Recommended) Origin – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Origin's flair for storytelling and atmosphere creating pays off once again.

Spaceward Ho!

(25) New World Computing – Space Combat £44.99
There are better strategy games for free.

Strike Commander

(65) Origin – Flight Sim £44.99
There are lots of brilliant bits, but unfortunately there's also an equal number of "unbrilliant" bits.

The Greatest

(70) Beau Jolly – Compilation £39.99
A good way to save £81.98 and try out some good, if slightly old, games.

The Legend

(60) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £44.99
A brave attempt to create a gothic role-playing game which doesn't quite gel.

The Terminator 2029

(50) Bethesda Softworks – Combat £29.99
Terminal Case.

Tony La Russa II

(73) SSI – Sport – Deleted
An exceptionally-detailed baseball game, and almost a very good one.

Unlimited Adventures

(59) SSI – Role-Playing Game £37.99
Competent, but not the most essential purchase ever.

Wayne Gretzky Hockey 3

(69) Bethesda Softworks – Sport £44.99
May appeal to buffs, but has nothing to attract the casual browser.

World Cricket

(30) Zeppelin Games – Sport £9.99
Unfortunately fails to provide either action or strategy.

Issue 4 – July 1993

Boston Bomb Club

(70) Simarils – Puzzle £9.99
Fairly basic but fairly addictive puzzler.

Cohort II

(30) Impressions – Strategy £34.99
All the fun and entertainment of a barium meal.

Eye of the Beholder III: Legend Of Myth Drannor
(64) SSI – Role-Playing Game £39.99

Has none of the feel or atmosphere of its prequels. Strictly for the yellow-fingernailed brigade only, I'm afraid.

Freddy Pharkas Frontier Pharmacist

(85: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99

An utterly absorbing, entertaining and difficult point 'n' click adventure with some incredibly naff in-jokes.

Macelstrom

(70) Empire – Strategy £39.99
You've read the review – you decide.

Nippon Sales Inc

(66) Global Software – Adventure £34.99
Great plot, nice artwork, decent price but nothing out of the ordinary.

Populous And The Promised Lands

(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Strategy £14.99
One of the greatest games ever written – buy it!

SimLife For Windows

(69) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Strategy £35.99

If you liked *SimEarth*... Fun, but not lasting fun.

Space Hulk

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
Death, destruction, blood, gore, tension, fear, and a damn good game as well.

Starblade

(22) Simarils – Space combat/Trading £9.99
It crashes a lot, but why care?

Strike Fleet

(75) Hit Squad – Wargame £14.99
A worthwhile addition to naval sims.

Super Sid II

(20) Microids – Sport £9.99
Sad, specy ski game.

The 7th Guest

(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99 (CD)

Technologically okay, but disappointingly weak on gameplay.

Tom Landry Strategic Football

(75) Merit Software – Sport £44.99
A very good, strategic, American football sim that could do with more player involvement.

V For Victory 3 – Market Garden

(82: Recommended) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £34.99

Why bother with boards, hexes and counters when you've got games like this?

Where In Space Is Carmen Sandiego?

(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Edutainment £39.99
Educational, fun and highly recommended.

Issue 5 – August 1993

10 Intelligent Strategy Games

(60) Oxford Softworks – Compendium £34.99
Good sampler and cheap if you need them all.

008 Attack Sub

(78) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99
Sub-standard? Definitely not!

Air Bucks v1.2

(49) Impressions – Strategy £34.99

A potentially interesting variation on a theme, which fails largely due to being more than a tad unexciting.

Betrayal At Kroner

(91: Classic) Dynamix – Role-Playing Game £44.99

The licence makes a lot of difference – great story, great game.

Championship Manager '93

(75) Domark – Sport £29.99
An undoubtedly "serious" management game that's involving, but occasionally unnecessarily slow.

Cheese Maniac 5 Billion & 1

(60) Spectrum Holobyte – Chess £44.99

Falls between two stools – and I'm being very nice here.

Dizzy Collection

(60) Codemasters – Compilation £35.99
Contains: *Fast Food Dizzy*, *Fantasy World Dizzy*, *Kwik Snack*, *Dizzy Prince Of Yolkfolk*, *Magicaland Dizzy*.

A poor egg-scuse to make totally unfunny egg yolks. Just about playable.

Ishtar 2: Messengers Of Doom

(50) Simarils – Role-Playing Game £32.99,
Would have been a real contender if it had been released a year or two earlier.

James Pond 2: Codename Robocod

(87: Recommended) Millennium – Platform Game £30.99 – Only available in a compilation
"Nifty scrolling, great gameplay" is our first remark on playing Robocod, closely followed by "Has anyone got a pair of sunglasses?"

Premier Manager

(59) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £29.99
Not recommended as a full-priced game – it would make a good, fun budget game.

Prince Of Persia 2: The Shadow And The Flame
(89: Recommended) Broderbund – Platform Game £39.99

We reckon they could have done more with it, but it's a corker nevertheless.

Protektor

(80: Recommended) Tsunami – Space Combat/Trading £39.99

A slick game that's full of nice touches and good ideas, but if you're not patient, don't bother.

Syndicate

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
Incredibly violent, completely amoral and brilliant fun.

The Cycles

(55) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Sadly, an overpriced and underpowered ride into the past.

War In The Gulf

(81: Recommended) Empire – Wargame £34.99
Another great set of blood-thirsty missions for one of the most playable 3D battle sims ever.

Worlds Of Legend

(73) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £25.99
Perfectly reasonable but rather old-fashioned fantasy RPG jobbie.

WWF Wrestlingmania

(58) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99
Fairly limited beat 'em up, which was delivered much better on the console.

Issue 6 – September 1993

Blade Of Destiny: Realm Of Arkana

(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Large in scale, absorbing to play – but more suited to "serious" role-players than your average gamer.

Rise Force

(35) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
Tiresome controls and sloppy design mar what could have been a decidedly average adventure.

Caesar's Palace For Windows

(65) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Casino Compendium £35.99

A good compilation; unnervingly addictive.

Fields Of Glory

(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Wargame £44.99
A brilliant sim that puts even the most reluctant wargamer right into the thick of it. Only its speed prevents it from being awarded Classic status.

Flashback

(89: Recommended) US Gold – Platform Game £37.99
It's *Prince Of Persia* in the future (but this time he's got a gun).

Lotus – The Ultimate Challenge

(68) Gremlin Graphics – Driving Game £34.99
Nothing particularly new, but good fun, especially in two player mode.

Maniac Mansion 2: Day Of The Tentacle

(85: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £42.99

Lovely graphics, good music, quite challenging but a bit too American for my

MI6-29: Fulcrum

(70) Domark – Flight Sim £14.99

Almost no scenery, but a nice flight model.

Monopoly

(75) Supervision – Board Game £34.99

A faithful conversion, which is slightly too flashy for its own good.

Napoleonic

(79) On-Line Entertainment – Wargame Compendium – Deleted £34.99

Three excellent and original Napoleonic wargames for tactical experts.

Open Golf

(50) Ocean – Sport – Deleted

A disappointing foray into the world of golf sims from Ocean.

Pinball Dreams

(78) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Simulation £37.99

As enjoyable as the real thing, but a bit on the pricey side.

Prehistorik 2

(50) Titus – Platform Game £7.99

A very average platform game, which competes with some budget titles but little else.

Rags To Riches

(60) Interplay – Strategy £39.99

Lacks excitement; unlikely to have a long life.

Return Of The Phantom

(73) MicroProse – Adventure £44.99

Delightfully atmospheric and aimed at beginners, but a tad too short and easy to

justify the price.

Sensible Soccer

(70) Renegade – Sport £34.99

The best football game around for the PC, but still not as good as it should've been.

Space Legends

(75) Empire – Compilation £34.99

You'll like at least two out of three.

The Immortal

(70) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99

At least four Sunday afternoons' play we reckon.

Tornado

(93: Classic) Digital Integration – Flight Sim £44.99
The more you play, the deeper it gets – eventually you'll need a bathyscape. Not for beginners.

Issue 7 – October 1993

Ambush At Sorinor

(70) Empire – Strategy £39.99

Short, sharp missions, and plenty of them, make this an interesting strategy game.

Archer Maclean's Pool (256 colour version)

(88: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £30.99

Exactly what it claims to be – the same game with more colours. Score assumes you don't have the original.

Caesar Deluxe

(70) Impressions – Strategy £34.99

More user-friendly than its predecessor but the game remains the same.

Clash Of Steel

(67) SSI – Wargame £39.99

Intricate and well presented wargame with plenty of appeal for the dedicated wargamer.

Day Of The Tentacle (CD)

(87: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £45.99
A very taxing, very American adventure, with some of the best animation ever.

Dune (CD)

(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99

A shining example of a good game made into a great game for CD.

Eric The Unready (CD)

(77) Accolade – Adventure £34.99

Hilarious, but the creaky interface isn't so funny.

F-15 Strike Eagle II

(85: Recommended) Kixx – Flight Sim £16.99

It still holds its own in a dogfight.

Flames Of Freedom

(70) Kixx – Strategy/Arcade £9.99

A bit old, a bit saggy, but will still give purists much fun.

Galactic Warrior Rats

(75) Alternative Software – Arcade £9.99



(Left) *X-Wing*: groove on down to the old "destroy the Death Star, save the croissant-haired princess" tune.

Totally simple, totally basic, but quite good fun nevertheless.

Gunboat

(54) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99
A better idea than game.

Hardball

(20) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99

Interesting only as an example of how bad baseball games used to be.

Imperial Pursuit

(80: Recommended) LucasArts – Space Sim £19.99
Long, involving "story-driven" tour of duty, perfect for Skywalker-wannabes.

King's Quest VI (CD)

(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £49.99
Excellent use of a CD, despite the "soft" story.

Lands Of Lore

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Role-Playing Game £35.99

A tasty and involving reminder of what *Eye Of The Beholder III* could have been.

Legend Of Kyrandia (CD)

(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99

Stunning to look at, but not really challenging enough if you're the type who has played a lot of adventures before.

LHX Attack Chopper

(88: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99
Still one of the classic flight sims.

Loom

(72) Kixx – Adventure £14.99

Simple and enchanting adventure; an ideal game for beginners.

Mean 18"

(60) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99

Reasonable mid-table golf game.

MIG-29

(75) MicroProse – Flight Sim £19.99

An excellent add-on for *Falcon 3.0* fans, but nothing groundbreaking in flight sim terms.

NHL Hockey

(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99

A great version of a brilliant game.

Pirates Gold!

(75) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

As good as the original. Unfortunately, it almost is the original.

Railroad Tycoon Deluxe

(72) MicroProse – Strategy £39.99

Not significantly better than the original, but if you haven't got that then add 20% to the score.

Ringworld (CD)

(82: Recommended) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99

An alternative to having it on disk; nothing more!

Rules Of Engagement 2

(91: Classic) Impressions – Strategy £44.99

A game of great depth and complexity.

Seal Team

(77) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up/Strategy £44.99

In storyboard form I imagine it looked fabulous. In transition to code, however, it feels like something has gone astray.

Simon The Sorcerer

(86: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £39.99

At last an Anglo answer to the average American adventure. Recommended.

The Lost Vikings

(80: Recommended) Interplay – Arcade £34.99

An excellent puzzle/platform/arcade game (categorise it yourself, we can't be bothered).

The Patrician

(65) Daze Marketing – Trading Sim £34.99

Desperate for a trading game set in the Hanseatic League but which could have been given more zap? Look no further.

Wing Commander Academy

(60) Origin – Flight Sim £19.99

This is only really worth it for *Wing Commander* combat addicts.

Issue 8 – November 1993

Battle Chess

(45) Interplay – Chess £44.99

Stalemate for the *Battlechess* series.

Blue Force (CD)

(40) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99

A criminal waste of a CD.

Conquered Kingdoms

(71) Mirage – Wargame £44.99

The rather second rate packaging and laughable manual conceals a highly playable, fantasy wargame.

Cover Girl Strip Poker

(40) On-Line Entertainment – Card Game £34.99

An appallingly bad poker game; a weak excuse for some dirty pics.

Flight Simulator 5.0

(90: Classic) Microsoft – Flight Sim £35.00

The definitive flying simulation, but not the definitive flying "game".

Gear Works

(62) The Software Business – Puzzle Game £19.99

Not good enough for the price and not cheap enough for what it is.

Grand Prix Circuit

(50) Hit Squad – Driving £12.99

Playable but crap for the price.

Hard Drivin' 2

(30) Hit Squad – Driving £12.99

Unplayable and crap for the price.

Homeworld: Gateway II

(75) Accolade – Adventure £39.99

Long, hard trek through pretty unatmospheric space.

Lord Of The Rings

(70) Interplay – Role-Playing Game £44.99

New and improved role-playing Tolkien jaunt for patient fantasy fans only.

Lost In Time

(69) Coktel Vision – Adventure £44.99

Tough, good looking adventure that comes a cropper at the end.

Motor Stars

(75) Revell – Racing £59.99

Sex on CD for kit-heads but coffee mat for every-one else.

Patriot

(75) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £44.95

A revolutionary but seriously flawed approach to land-based wargaming.

Shadowlands

(65) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £12.99

As good as the original.

Solitaire's Journey

(87) Mirage – Puzzle £44.99

The closest that solitaire fans will get to Heaven on Earth.

Stronghold

(80: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99

Extremely addictive even if you'd normally steer clear of D&D™.

Super Space Invaders

(75) Hit Squad – Arcade £9.99

Here's a blast from the past for less than a round of drinks.

T2

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade £29.99

Mindless, chaotic and highly addictive.

The Silver Seed (Ultima VII Add-On Disk)

(50) Origin – Role-Playing Game £19.99

An utterly pointless addition to a brilliant game. One can only turn to Origin and ask "Why?"

Troddlers

(79) SCI – Puzzle Game £29.99

Not at all bad, but it smacks too much of other games to achieve classic status.

Issue 9 – December 1993

Blue Angels

(30) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £12.99

Interesting, but hardly spectacular.

Brutal Football

(65) Millennium – Sport £29.99

Too much violence, not enough game.

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat

(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99

Living proof that pensioners still have what it takes.

Clix

(62) The Genesis Arcade – Puzzle Game £14.99

Nice idea, shame about the gameplay.

Cogito

(57) Mindscape – Puzzle Game £29.99

A reasonably entertaining and challenging puzzle game, but only for the patient.

Dark Sun: Shattered Lands

(83: Recommended) SSI – Role-Playing Game £45.99

The next best thing to an *Ultima*.

Dino Dini's Goal

(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £35.99,

Kick Off with sideways options (but it works).

Not as good as *Sensible Soccer*.

Dracula

(65) Psynopsis – Arcade £39.99

A good, challenging game, but the execution should have been better.

Frontier: Elite II

(95: Classic) Gametek – Space Trading Sim £39.99

Without doubt an unrivalled classic; nothing else even comes close.

Front Page Sports Football Pro

(85: Recommended) Dynamix – Sport £39.99

The best around, but you'll definitely need a high-spec machine.

Goblins

(50) Coktel Vision – Puzzle £39.99

An unimproved CD version of an original but inspired game.

Hook

(35) Hit Squad – Adventure £12.99

At last we have perhaps the most faithful film conversion around. The movie was a turkey, so is the game.

Jack The Ripper

(39) Mirage – Adventure £44.99

Ugly, unpleasant and boring. I know, give it a job with PC Zone.

Jutland

(72) On-Line Entertainment – Strategy £59.99

Good but sadly there are too many unnecessary gimmicks.

Kasparov's Gambit

(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Chess £44.99

Excellent chess game with attitude and personality.

Magic Candle II

(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99

Good as an RPG, excellent as a budget.

NFL Coaches Club Football

(70) MicroProse – Sport £44.99

Certainly a good attempt but it's a shame that it's badly let down by the rather poor passing system.

Privateer

(75) Origin – Flight Sim £49.99

Wing Commander fans will love this. *X-Wing* fans won't. It's as simple as that.

Sim Farm

(79) Maxis – Strategy £34.99

Quite good if you like farming, but not as good as *Sim City*.

Steel Thunder

(60) Hit Squad – Arcade £12.99

Reasonable fun, but not one you'd come back to.

Street Fighter II

(81: Recommended) US Gold – Beat 'Em Up – £29.99

Addictive and violent but the cross over to the PC hindered unless you invest in a game pad.

Strike Commander: Tactical Operations

(80: Recommended) Origin – Flight Sim £19.99

Essential if you're determined to get the most out of *Strike Commander*.

V for Victory 4: Gold-Juno-Sword

(78) Three-Sixty Pacific £34.99

It's still the best computer wargames system but it needs a shot in the arm... or leg... or both even.

When Two Worlds War

(63) Impressions – Wargame £34.99

An unattractive attempt at a strategy wargame that fails to add anything new – including excitement. Give us dice and counters any day...

Issue 10 – January 1994

8 Ball Deluxe

(75) Supervision – Pinball Game £34.99

Technically, the best pinball game there is, but there's not enough of it for the price.

20th Century Almanac

(30) The Software Business – General Interest £74.99

Outrageous price for a poor substitute for a hardback encyclopaedia.

Aces Over Europe

(78) Dynamix – Flight Sim £44.99

It's better than *Aces Of The Pacific*, but so it should be. Dated, but still very playable.

Air Combat Classics

(60) US Gold – Flight Sim £45.99

Shows just how far things have progressed in five years.

Allen Breed

(75) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99

Enjoyable, undemanding shoot 'em up that comes into its own in two-player mode.

Dracula Unleashed

(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £39.99

Classy adventure that you can really get your teeth into.

Dreamlands

(72) Daze Marketing – Compendium £29.99

The ideas and graphics are interesting, the gameplay, however, isn't.

Goblins 2

(67) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £44.99

Zany puzzle game, frustrating at times but mostly good fun.

IndyCar Racing

(93: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £44.99

The new definitive driving game. And it comes with a free moustache.

Innocent Until Caught

(84: Recommended) Psynopsis – Adventure £44.99

Well worth nicking. Ho ho.

Jurassic Park

(73) Ocean – Adventure £34.99

Despite some irritating flaws, an atmospheric and addictive game.

Knights Of The Sky

(79) Kixx – Strategy £16.99

A game that's well worth buying for the two-player option alone.

Links Championship Course: Innisbrook

(75) US Gold – Sport £24.99

If you really want another *Links* course, then this is one.

Links

(80: Recommended) Kixx – Sport £16.99,

An excellent golf game for anyone with a less than ninja PC.

Lords Of Power

(85: Recommended) Ubisoft – Strategy £39.99

A first class simulation which you would be mad not to buy.

Network Q RAC Rally 2

(80: Recommended) Europress Software – Driving £34.99

A rather good addition to the current crop of driving games, if you can stand the opponent's amazing skills.

Newsweek Interactive

(30) The Software Business – General Interest £39.99

Over-priced, over-patronising and over here.

Night Shift

(70) Kixx – £12.99

A suitably frantic and frustrating puzzler.

Oceans Below

(70) The Software Business – Edutainment £39.99



(Left) *Simon The Sorcerer*: at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour – albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.

Strike Squad

(25) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Just turn the page and get on with enjoying life, okay?

The Blue And The Gray

(78) Impressions – Wargame £39.99
Dedicated blood 'n' guts fans will find it a little simplistic, but it's a great all-round wargame with hidden depths and long term playability.

The Even More Incredible Machine

(89: Recommended) Dynamix £39.99
If you've never played *The Incredible Machine* now's the time to start. So what are you waiting for?

World Class Rugby

(60) Audiogenic – Sport £14.99
Not really worth the wobble.

World War Two: Battles Of The South Pacific

(62) Mirage – Strategy/Action £44.99
Innovative mix of naval strategy and action. The gameplay doesn't quite live up to expectations –

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Advantage Tennis

(55) Infogrames – Sport £35.99
Unexciting tennis game that lacks punch.

Alone In The Dark 2

(97: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure – £39.99
Absolutely Brilliant! What the PC was made for.

Alone In The Dark (CD)

(92: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
Still the best thing since sliced bread. Buy it.

B-Wing

(72) US Gold – Space Sim £19.99
Your sister either fancied Han Solo or Luke Skywalker. You'll either fancy B-Wing or, er, something else.

Capitol Hill (CD)

(75) Software Toolworks – Edutainment £39.99
Comprehensive introduction to American politics

Chessmaster 4000 Turbo

(90: Classic) Mindscape – Chess £34.99
Tough opponent: gentle teacher.

Critical Path (CD)

(72) Media Vision – Adventure £49.99
Slick and atmospheric but way too short.

Dungeon Hack

(62)SSI – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Not enough there. Not enough design options. Not enough gameplay. Very hardened and grizzled role-players only.

Fire And Ice

(75) Renegade – Platform Game £29.99
A fun, but difficult game, marred only by an over-inflated price and ridiculous copy protection.

Flight Sim Toolkit

(80: Recommended) Domark – Simulation £49.99
Recommended, but only if you find *Stunt Island* limiting. It can be very heavy going.

Global Dominator

(65) Impressions – Strategy £39.99
Slick, addictive strategy game but it presents no long term challenge.

Goblins 3

(75) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £39.99
Good for beginners and a pleasant diversion for seasoned adventurers.

Kingmaker

(88: Recommended) US Gold – Board Game £37.99
Without doubt the best board game conversion for a long, long time.

Magic Boy

(60) Empire – Platform Game £25.99
Not very "magic" at all.

Master Of Orion

(72) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
A good one for all the accountants out there.

Rebel Assault

(93: Classic) LucasArts – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
It's *Star Wars*. It's also the most important game to date.

Striker

(55) Elite – Sport £29.99
Another Paul Bodin penalty of the gamesplaying world.

Subwar 2050

(88: Recommended) MicroProse – Simulation £44.99
Easily the best "fun" simulation that MicroProse has produced.

The Labyrinth Of Time

(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Adventure £39.99

Beautiful, alluring, a touch slow and a little fussy. A quite superb adventure though.

The Terminator Rampage

(75) Bethesda Softworks – Arcade £39.99
Okay, but once you've seen *Doom*, you'll laugh in *Rampage*'s face and spill its pint.

VGA Planets

(70) PAW PBM – Role-Playing Game £24.99
A rather interesting type of role-playing game that takes some time, but is generally worth the wait.

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Campaign

(52) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Dim-witted attempt at simulating armoured action – too buggy to recommend, despite colourful graphics and arcade sequences.

Championship Manager '94

(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's still the best (just).

Championship Manager Italia

(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's the best too, just with a few more noughts at the end of the transfer figures.

Combat Classics 2

(50) Empire – Flight Sim Compendium £34.99
Sadly, this compilation contains one classic and two rather second-rate duds.

Companions Of Xanth

(73) Accolade – Adventure £39.99
Awful puns. Questionable humour. Very *Monkey Island*-esque. What more could you want from an adventure?

Cyber Race

(64) Cyberdreams – Racing £44.99
Mildly entertaining for a quick blast, but that's about it.

Fury Of The Furies

(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Puzzle/Platform Game £39.99

A riveting platform puzzler, but not for the easily frustrated.

Gabriel Knight

(92: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
Brilliant and frightening offering from Sierra.

Genesis

(83: Recommended) Mindscape – Strategy £34.99
A little bit of *Populous*, a little bit of *Civilisation*.

Hand Of Fate

(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment
Adventure £39.99
You've got to hand it to Westwood, this is a bit of a stunner.

Heirs To The Throne

(43) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
If I got this kind of quality from a PD game I'd be blinking well complain.

Indianapolis 500

(65) Hit Squad – Driving £14.99
A once-great giant succumbs to the ravages of time.

Leisure Suit Larry 6

(75) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £35.99
The best *Larry* yet; but he's getting way past his sell-by date.

Lilli Divil

(90: Classic) Gremlin Graphics – Puzzle Game £39.99
An excellent puzzle game with wit and flair.

Police Quest 4: Open Season

(78) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A thoroughly professional job for those who can think and click at the same time.

Premier Challenge

(78) T'ai Chi – Sport £24.99
Design your own game. Boost this score.

Premier Manager 2

(65) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £34.99
It's better, but still too obsessed with interior decorating for my liking.

Shadow Of Darkness

(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99

A compelling storyline, but dull battle scenes.

The Incredible Toons

(82: Recommended) Dynamix – Puzzle Game £39.99

Zany, silly and highly addictive.

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Archon Ultra

(78) US Gold – Strategy £39.99

More beat 'em up than strategy.

Beneath A Steel Sky

(83: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Flight Sim £39.99

Graphically good and pleasingly puzzling jaunt that you'll feel like returning to.

Conspiracy

(67) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99

Takes all the fun out of Ruskie bashing.

D-Day

(38) US Gold – Wargame £35.99

D-Day lies bleeding in the no man's land of wargames.

Daemongate

(45) Gametek – Role-Playing Game £29.99

Out-dated, tedious and visually vestigial.

Doom

(96: Classic) iD Software – Arcade £34.99

The best arcade game and the best multi-player game ever. *Doom* is the best.

Hired Guns

(77) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Ishar 2 with robots.

Hot Sound And Vision

(85: Recommended) Interplay – General Interest £44.99

An outstanding collection.

Interplay's 10 Year Anthology

(85: Recommended) Interplay – Compendium £49.99
A cost-effective way to build an instant library of classic games.

Micro Machines

(70) Codemasters – Arcade £29.99

A good two-player game (if you have a decent PC).

Mortal Kombat

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Beat 'Em Up £29.99

Not as good as the SNES *Street Fighter II*, but the best on the PC.

Nomad

(78) Gametek – Space Strategy £29.99

Good game if you're more into exploring than fighting.

Pinball Fantasies

(80: Recommended) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £37.95

The meanest machine of them all and a worthy successor to the original *Pinball Dreams*.

Reunion

(80: Recommended) Grand Slam – Strategy £TBA
Reunion has something for everyone.

Sim City 2000

(92: Classic) Maxis – Strategy £39.99

Brilliant game that'll make you anally retentive in the extreme.

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary

(86: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure £49.99
A game boldly going where it's been before, just a little more vocally.

Strike Commander (CD)

(86: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99

Superior flight sim, but you need the hardware to match.

The Complete UMS

(58) Mirage – Strategy £44.99

Both classics in their day, the two *UMS* games are a bit too long in the tooth to excite anyone but the real enthusiast.

The Lawnmower Man

(77) Sales Curve Interactive – Arcade £54.99

Excellent presented. Just a little more complexity in the gameplay and it would have been unreservedly recommended.

Winter Olympics

(64) US Gold – Sport £42.99

Has its moments, but you'll probably play it for a few hours and thereafter pick it up once a year if you get really bored.

Wizard

(73) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99

A good stepping stone into the land of RPGs.

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Air Transport Pilot (CD)

(70) RC Simulations – Simulation £79.95

Not my idea of fun but a reasonable effort for a simulation of this type.

Airlines

(20) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Strategy £39.99

Ugly, fiddly and totally boring.

Arena: The Elder Scrolls

(62) Bethesda Softworks – Role-Playing Game £45.99
Disappointing reality.

Award Winner Gold Edition

(88: Recommended) Empire – Arcade £34.99
Superb quality games with unrivalled value for money. Buy it now!

Battle Isle 2

(91: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £54.99

Without a shadow of a doubt, the strategy game of the year.

Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (CD)

(95: Classic) Interplay – Strategy – £39.99

A stunning improvement of an already classic game.

Cannon Fodder

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade/ Strategy £34.99

Great fun for all the wrong and right reasons.

CD-ROM Challenge Pack

(75) Software Toolworks – Compendium £39.99

Reasonable good compilation, but there are better ones around.

Championship Manager For Windows

(79) Domark – Sport £29.99

A wasted opportunity. Not as good as the DOS version.

D/Generation

(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £19.99

Probably the best game that Windows users have ever played.

Excellent Games

(85: Recommended) Beau Jolly – Various £39.99

Great games at a great price. A compilation not to be missed, including *Populous 2*, *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*, *Car And Driver* and *Robocod*.

Fantastic Dizzy

(50) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99

Wrong time. Wrong format. Wrong price.

Gabriel Knight (CD)

(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99

Brooding, atmospheric thriller.

In Extremis

(67) US Gold – Arcade £37.99

You'll shriek! You'll shout! You'll yawn!

Johnny Quest

(12) Software Business – Arcade/Adventure £29.99
Can basically be summed up in one word.

Dreadful

Megarace

(65) Mindscape – Racing £39.99

A superb demonstration of what can be done graphically with CD-ROM... and how easy it is for gameplay to suffer as a result.

Merchant Prince

(82: Recommended) Mirage – Strategy £44.99

Don't let the dodgy graphics fool you. If you give this game half a chance you'll be hooked.

Microcosm

(70) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99

Brilliant graphics and excellent sound. Let down by limited gameplay.

NFL Pro League Football

(50) Digital Integration – Sport £39.99

As a play-editor it's okay, but playing the game itself is disappointing.

Privateer: Righteous Fire

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Add-On £19.99

Privateer fans definitely won't be disappointed with this one.

Seawolf

(83: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99

A highly atmospheric sub sim with a control interface from hell.

Starlord

(70) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

It could have been excellent. Could have been.

(Right) *IndyCar Racing*: great graphics and playability make this the best ever driving game.

(Far right) *Sam & Max*: The clue's inside the cat. Rip its head off! (Sick, or what?)



Damn!

The Patrician (CD)

(70) Daze Marketing – Strategy £39.99

A good game on disk, slightly better on CD.

The Red Crystal

(43) Mirage – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Don't ask your friends to play this if you want to keep them.

Unnecessary Roughness

(66) Accolade – Sport £39.99

Best described as "alright". It's as good as most American footy sims.

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Bloodnet

(75) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £39.99

Hindered by outdated implementation, but still well worth a look.

Carriers At War II

(63) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99

For die-hard strategy aficionados.

Darkseed

(90: Classic) Cyberdreams – Adventure £44.99

If you have a taste for the macabre, you'll never forget the *Darkseed* affair.

Diggers

(40) Millennium – Puzzle Game £34.99

Mind-numbingly tedious.

Disney Animation Studio

(75) Infogrames – General Interest £99.99

More serious approach with superb sample animations that you can't use!

Dragonsphere

(69) MicroProse – Adventure £39.99

A beautiful adventure game that won't tax your brain too heavily.

Evasive Action

(40) Mindscape – Simulation £34.99

So close, but more bugs than Watergate.

F1

(40) Domark – Sport £29.99

The champions of sport produce yet another world-beater.

Fleet Defender

(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99

Heavyweight flight sim, both helped and hindered by over-clever graphics.

Hanna-Barbera Animation Workshop

(75) Empire – General Interest £49.99

Tries to make everything fun and encourages you to try out other methods of animation.

Hornet Naval Strike Fighter

(80: Recommended) Spectrum Holobyte – Flight Sim £TBA

As that well known saying goes: "If you like Falcon 3, you'll just love *Hornet*".

Myst

(67) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99

Surreal and atmospheric, if not realistic.

Pacific Strike

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99

Miles better than *Strike Commander* but requires a state-of-the-art, ninja PC.

Pagan: Ultima VII

(78) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Without doubt a love/hate relationship for Ultima purists.

Ravenloft

(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £45.99

SSI has finally got "real" and produced a playable and accessible RPG.

Red Hell

(60) Cyberdreams – Adventure £39.99

The graphics are poor and the control system is dire. Avoid it.

RedShift

(95: Classic) Maris Multimedia Ltd – General Interest £89.00

A stunning program which will be hard to beat.

Sabre Team

(60) Krisalis – Strategy £29.99

This has all been done before, and done much better as well.

Shadowcaster

(70) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £39.99

Considerable enhancements for CD but the gameplay remains the same.

Spaceship Warlock

(70) Reactor/Ubisoft – Adventure £44.99

Very slick, very polished. The gameplay's a bit limited but it's fun all the same.

TFX

(80: Recommended) Ocean – Simulation £44.99

Great game with totally superfluous bells and whistles.

UFO Enemy Unknown

(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

Brilliantly designed, perfectly implemented and totally absorbing.

Washington DC Scenery

(85: Recommended) Supervision – Flight Sim Add-On £39.99

One of the best flight sim add-ons to date.

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Castles II

(65) Interplay – Strategy £49.95

Interplay usually releases excellent games – this isn't one of them.

Comanche (CD)

(90: Classic) Optima – Flight Sim £49.99

Brilliant action-packed helicopter simulation at a great price on CD.

Companions Of Xanth (CD)

(84: Recommended) Accolade – Role-Playing Game £39.99

Great game on disk. Even better on CD.

Corridor 7

(55) Gametek – Arcade £19.99

Nothing new or exciting.

Detroit

(85: Recommended) Impressions – Strategy £39.99

An intriguing strategy/sim which boasts both originality and playability.

Dragon's Lair

(67) Elite Systems – Adventure £39.99

An interactive cartoon that's more "cartoon" than "interactive".

Eye Of The storm

(40) Rebellion – Space/Strategy £39.99

Very futuristic, very *Elite* and very, very crap.

Great Naval Battles 2

(86: Recommended) US Gold – Simulation £45.99

SSI cruises easily to the head of the fleet with this simply stunning sim.

Hand Of Fate (CD)

(78) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £49.99

Good game, shame about the conversion. In this case, more equals less.

Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition

(85: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99

A good golf game at an amazing price.

Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker

(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Sport £14.99

Dangerously addictive snooker sim.

Lucky's Casino Adventure

(60) Mirage – Card Game £44.99

Challenging, fun, totally addictive but a bit pricey.

Lure Of The Temptress

(55) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99

Old and fading.

Power Game 2 (CD)

(70) Activision – Simulation £29.99

Worth looking at if you don't have the hardware to run the latest sim.

Robinson's Requiem

(85: Recommended) Daze Marketing – Role-Playing Game £39.99

This is a highly original and addictive "survival sim", which, unfortunately, has some annoying bits.

Sam And Max Hit The Road

(93: Classic) US Gold – Adventure £45.99

Brilliantly original and a highly humorous jaunt.

Sim City Classic

(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £16.99

Still a great game but check out *Sim City 2000* first.

Sim City Enhanced

(82: Recommended) Interplay – Strategy £49.99

Sim City's an excellent game but *50* quid is a bit steep for a few enhancements.

Sleepwalker

(45) Hit Squad – Platform Game £9.99

Third-rate platformer. Stay well away from it.

Space Hulk

(87: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99

Still a tremendous game, but not as good as the disk-based version.

Summer Challenge & Winter Challenge

(80: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99

Good compilation, great value.

The Horde

(87: Recommended) US Gold – Strategy/Arcade £44.99

Not an original concept but extremely well implemented.

The Rock 'N' Roll Years – The '50s

(70) Supervision – General Interest £24.99

Handy for '50s music lovers or as a reference – but we doubt if it'll get you rockin' round the clock.

The Settlers

(89: Recommended) Blue Byte – Strategy £39.99

A damn fine, engrossing game.

Theatre Of War

(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £12.99

Excellent strategy game and it looks cool too.

UFO

(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

Incredibly addictive strategy game.

Wembley Rugby League

(66) Audiogenic – Sport £29.99

This manages to be quite an improvement on previous rugby games.

Wolfpack

(60) Optima – Strategy £29.99

Disappointingly average.

World Cup Challenge

(48) Winsport – Sport £29.95

Disappointing, absurdly RAM-hungry and limited in its playing life.

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1942: Pacific Air War

(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99

Two great games – *Carrier Battles* and *Task Force 1942* – in one package. It's a winner!

AI Quadrim: The Gentle's Curse

(40) US Gold/SSI – Role-Playing Game £35.99

The thinking amoeba's beat 'em up.

Burntime

(43) Max Design – Strategy £39.99

Hey, it's just like being there.

Cool Spot

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Platform Game £29.99

Charm and accessibility save it from being strictly seventies-y!

Delta V

(64) Bethesda Softworks – Shoot 'Em Up £45.99

Very fast and pretty stunning to look at, but it won't keep you up into the night.

Dinosaur Detective Agency

(42) Alternative Software – Platform Game £16.99

Cheap – but that's no reason to be cheerful.

Empire Soccer

(57) Empire – Sport £29.99

Let down by the small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.

Good To Firm

(50) New Era Software – Sport £29.99

Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience will pall.

International Tennis Open

(88: Recommended) Philips Interactive Media – Sport £44.99

Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.

Jack Nicklaus (CD)

(78) Accolade – Sport £16.99

A perfectly serviceable golf game with a good course editor tacked on. Wait for me while I put my golfing shoes on...

Newsweek 3 Globocop (CD)

(0) Mindscape – General Interest £39.99

The most expensive beer mat in the world.

Overlord

(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Simulation £39.99

An old idea made new with some interesting tweaks.

Pinball Dreams 2

(70) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £19.99

Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball

wizards to get their flippers into.

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye

(88: Recommended) Activision – Puzzle Game £29.99

Puzzles galore in this excellent addition to the rather mediocre range of games currently available for Windows.

Sherlock Holmes – The Case Of The Serrated Scalpel

(48) Electronic Arts – Adventure £49.99

Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.

Simon The Sorcerer (CD)

(89: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £44.99

A tricky adventure jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.

Syndicate (CD)

(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99

What a game. What a barg.

Tactical Manager

(75) Black Legend – Sport £34.99

An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.

Theme Park

(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99

A highly inventive "business" sim that's fun, fun, fun all the way. Hip hip hoorah for Bullfrog.

Walls Of Rome

(74) Digital Integration – Strategy £16.99

Good, if thin, fun.

World Cup USA '94

(78) US Gold – Sport £32.99

Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.

Zool 2

(82: Recommended) Millennium – Platform £34.99

As they say, if you liked *Zool*, you'll love this.

Issue 18 – September 1994

Beneath A Steel Sky (CD)

(72) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99

Comic book-style adventure with excellently funny dialogue but lacking any real depth.

D-Day

(40) Impressions – War Game £39.99

A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a war game without many redeeming features.

FIFA International Soccer

(70) Electronic Arts – Sport £39.99

Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay.

Harpoon II

(70) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99

Massive, embarrassingly serious sim. Superb detail, occasionally nail-biting, always sloooooow.

Inherit



(Left) *Theme Park*:
Sim City eat your
heart out.

Below average imitation of an above-average game.

TIE Fighter
(94: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Space Sim £49.99
Sheer, undiluted quality. Treat yourself to a copy.

Issue 19 - October 1994

74 Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks!
(90: Classic) SSI - Wargame £39.99
Never mind the 50-ton tanks - this is 50-tons of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.

Battle Bugs
(65) Dynamix - Strategy £17.99
A battle game with bugs in it (as opposed to a bugged battle game).

Dark Legions
(85: Recommended) SSI - Strategy £35.99
Wonderfully entertaining animations and game screens with hidden strategic depths.

Heimdall 2
(45) Core - Adventure £39.99
Great game, shame you can't play it.

Hell Cab
(50) Time Warner - Adventure £49.99
It's the same old story. Great graphics, but sadly lacking in gameplay.

IndyCar Racing Expansion Pack
(94: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Driving £17.99
These tracks are better than the original tracks (if you pretend Phoenix doesn't exist).

Ishar III: The Seven Gates Of Infinity
(50) Simarils - Strategy £39.99
Sum up *Ishar III* in one word? Avoid. Simple as that. The worst of a bunch.

KGB
(65) Hit Squad - Adventure £14.99
Bargain? Maybe. Boring? Definitely.

Kick Off 3
(55) Anco - Sport £29.99
Nice features, but gameplay not up to much.

Manchester United Premier League Champions
(60) Krisalis - Sport £29.99
Sensi revisited (although not as good) with a lot of features thrown in.

Planet Football
(68) Infogrames - Sport £39.99
The World Cup produced a rash of rush releases. This is not one of the best.

Police Quest IV - Open Season
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line - Adventure £44.99
Atmospheric and very entertaining. A bit of a let down at the end, though.

Summer Challenge
(73) Hit Squad - Sport £12.99
Not a bad game by sports sim standards and easy to cheat at, but do you really want another sport sim?

Under A Killing Moon
US Gold - Adventure £59.99
Pigs can fly. Interactive movies do exist. Sort of.

Wing Commander: Armada
(76) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £44.99
Lots of good ideas stuck together but it doesn't hang quite right.

Issue 20 - November 1994

Alien Legacy
(80: Recommended) Sierra - Strategy £39.99
Space strategy thing which is a bit like *Outpost* without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but ultimately very rewarding.

Chaos Engine
(80: Recommended) Renegade - Arcade £32.99
A damned good, multi-direction scrolling, shooty thing with lots of big guns and silly characters.

Colonization
(90: Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99
Try to imagine *Civilization* with more depth and better graphics. Well done... you've just imagined *Colonization*.

Cyclemania (CD)
(83: Recommended) Accolade - Arcade £39.99
Extremely competent *Road Rash* 3DO rip-off with lovely digitised backdrops and big motorbikes.

Desert Strike
(78) Gremlin - Arcade £34.99
Conversion of the Mega Drive classic, isometric helicopter, blast 'em up game. The graphics are a bit crap but it's immensely playable.

Doom II
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive - Arcade £49.99
The sequel to one of the best games ever. New graphics, a new gun and new monstrosities. Miss it at your peril.

Inferno (CD)
(88: Recommended) Ocean - Space/Sim £44.99
Eagerly awaited game from EA. Basically the same as the original (reviewed issue seven) but with new stats.

KA-50 Hokum
(85: Recommended) Virgin - Simulation £39.99
Without a doubt the very best helicopter simulator money can buy. Something for the propeller heads out there (yes, we know you're out there...).

NHL Hockey 95 (CD)
(91: Classic) EA - Sports/Arcade £34.99
A new version of the top-down scrolly, ice hockey game from EA. Basically the same as the original (reviewed issue seven) but with new stats.

PGA 486 (CD)
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts - Sports £44.99
Gorgeous looking, solid playing, tasty little golf game. One of the best on the PC so far.

Pinball Dreams CD
(70) 21st Century - Arcade £39.99
Eight wonderfully designed, smoothly scrolling pinball tables. Why is it on CD?

System Shock
(95: Classic) EA/Origin - RPG £44.99
Pant-wettingly fantastic, cyberpunk, RPG thing. All hail *System Shock*, that shalt be king hereafter (until *System Shock II* comes out, that is).

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Possibly the best beat 'em up on the PC so far with some excellent rendered sprites.

Space Simulator
(75) Microsoft - Simulator £39.99
A huge simulation of man's quest for space that is a little too ambitious for its own good.

Star Crusader
(60) Gametech - Shoot 'em up £39.99
Basically this is a poor man's *Wing Commander* with some nice CD bits.

Transport Tycoon
(94: Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99
One of the best strategy games around and a more than worthy sequel to *Railroad Tycoon*.

Total Carnage
(74) ICE - Shoot 'em up £27.99
Good challenging fun and a more than competent conversion of the original arcade machine.

Issue 22 - January 1995

Aces of the Deep
(90: Classic) Dynamix/Sierra - £39.99
Graphics, gameplay, sound and atmo combine to make this the best sub game available.

All New World of Lemmings
(78) Digital Integration - £39.99
If you like all the other *Lemmings* games, you'll like this one too.

Armored Fist
(86: Recommended) US Gold/Novologic £44.99
Comanche on wheels. Er, tracks. You know what I mean.

Creature Shock
(78) Virgin - £49.99
An engrossing, atmospheric 3D adventure game. Great graphics, absorbing levels, but lousy soundtrack.

CyberWar
(55) SCI - £49.99
It looks amazing. The gameplay isn't.

Dark Sun II
(80: Recommended) Mindscape - £44.99
Love it for its brains not for its looks.

Discworld
(96: Classic) Psygnosis - £49.99
Discworld is possibly the best point-and-click adventure game ever made.

Front Page Sports Baseball
(85: Recommended) Sierra - £44.99
It takes all the best bits from all the best games and ends up being the best.

Klik 'n' Play
(88: Recommended) Europress - £39.99
Neat intuitive, and loads of fun.

Novastorm
(40) Psygnosis - £44.99
Repeat ad nauseam: "Pretty graphics doth not a game make."

Power Drive
(50) US Gold - £39.99
30 whole points off for no two-player mode. Sod off Power Drive.

Quarantine
(80: Recommended) Gametech - £39.99
An excellent blast and it looks good too.

Retribution
(45) Gremlin Interactive - £39.99
Not only is it a below average shoot 'em up, it has pretensions too.

US Navy Fighters
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts - £44.99
If it had a multi-player facility, I'd give it 100. But it hasn't, so I won't.

Warcraft
(75) Interplay - £39.99
Good, simple, addictive strategy game.

Issue 23 - February 1995

Alone in the Dark 3
(95 - Classic) Infogrames - Adventure £44.99
The mega-stonkingly weird and wonderful final chapter in the *Alone in the Dark* trilogy.

Cannon Fodder 2
(74) Virgin Interactive - Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Just more of the same or is *Cannon Fodder 2* a significant improvement? Sensible returns with more "fun with a gun".

Commander Blood
(81 - Recommended) Mindscape - Adventure £44.99
It's French, and guess what? It's weird. Very weird. We try not to get at them for it... but this is just plain mad.

Cyberia
(80 - Recommended) Interplay - Adventure/Shoot 'em up £49.99
A contender for the "Best-looking game of 1994" award. Tastier than treacle pudding with lashings of thick custard, and almost certainly better than *Rebel Assault*.

Dragon Lore
(81 - Mindscape) Interplay - Adventure £44.99
Cryo's epic multi-CD graphic adventure finally arrives. Is it just more French weirdness or is it actually a decent game?

Hammer of the Gods
(77) US Gold - Strategy £17.99
Nordic domination and general Euro-bashing in this simple but addictive strategy war sim from New World Computing.

Kyrandia 3
(87 - Recommended) Virgin - Adventure £44.99
Westwood's *Fables and Fiends* series makes it to number three, and this time you get to play the bad guy!

Lion King
(71) Virgin - Platform game £29.99
The smash-hit movie turns into a reasonable-ish platform game. *PC Zone* good tip number one (in a series of...) - just pretend your PC is a Mega Drive.

NASCAR Racing
(84 - Recommended) Virgin - Racing Sim £44.99
Payroll follows up *IndyCar* with the popular American sport of driving round and round in circles.

Noctropolis
(79) Electronic Arts - Adventure £44.99
For a change Electronic Arts goes all weird, gothic and horrific in this unusual super-hero adventure.

Ultimate Body Blows
(78) Team 17 - Beat 'em up £29.99
An Amiga conversion from Team 17. Don't be put off by that, though - it's actually quite good.

Voyeur
(40) Interplay - Adventure £39.99
Not as pervy as people think. Yes, there are suspenders and braies in it but no nudity and no naughtiness (well, not much, at least not enough to satisfy the male staff on *PC Zone*).

Wing Commander 3
(62) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £59.99
Four million dollars, Luke Skywalker and a well-known porn actress - definitely a potentially interesting situation if ever there was one.

Aladdin
(70) Virgin - Arcade £29.99
He leaps tall buildings, cuts through baddies with his scimitar and wears pointy slippers. He's Aladdin - who else.

Dark Forces
(95 - Classic) LucasArts/Virgin - Action adventure £54.99
The empire is finally Doom-ed, but is it better than the real thing? We bring you the first review of the game everyone's itching to get their hands on, in a special world exclusive, courtesy of LucasArts and Virgin.

Doom Clones: Head to Head
(55) Merit - Action adventure £39.99
We put Merit's *Dr Radiaki* up against *Virtuosos* from Elite and run for cover (well, *Doom*, actually).

Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller
(25) Gametech - Adventure £39.99
It is: it isn't. If it's really this bad then start praying for forgiveness immediately.

Kick Off 3: European Challenge
(70) Anco - Sport £29.99
The last *Kick Off* was an absolute nightmare. Have Anco finally got it together in Europe?

King's Quest VII
(93 - Classic) Sierra - Adventure £44.99
The latest point and click extravaganza from the Roberta Williams' school of mush-wushy.

Issue 24 - March 1995

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(Right) *Alone in the Dark 3*: More Carny, cobwebs, murder, mystery and total mayhem.

(Far right) *Command & Conquer*: A case of Cannon Fodder meets *Dune 2*.



cutesy-wutesyness.

Knights of Xentar

(10) Megatech - Adventure £49.99

A plentiful lack of Beat 'em up action strides onto the PC, courtesy of Megatech. Ouch!

Menzoberanzan

(68) Mindscape - RPG £TBA

Not a tasty lozenge that promises to clear your stuffy nose and soothe your sore throat, but a rather ordinary RPG from SSI.

Metaltech: Earthsleage

(87- Recommended) Sierra - Simulation £39.99

Go stomping mad in this spectacular HERC-fest from Sierra. Just one thing though, why have extravagant HERCs that walk when the terrain is perfectly flat?

Realms of Arkania: Star Trail

(85- Recommended) US Gold - RPG £44.99

The sequel to the keenly received *Blade of Destiny* finally makes it onto CD-ROM. Hip, hip...

SuperKarts

(82- Recommended) Virgin - Action £TBA

The most fun you can have with your bum only an inch off the ground, when wearing a crash helmet and clad in brightly-coloured leather.

TIE Fighter: Defender of the Empire

(73) LucasArts - Space/Action £19.99

Two new missions and a new ship. What will they think of next?

Wings of Glory

(78) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £TBA

Chocks away as Origin reach for the skies to do battle with the Hun, dastardly chaps with 'taches and every other WWI flight sim ever created.

Issue 25 - April 1995

BC Racers

(62) Core Design - Racing sim £34.99

Chuck Rock meets Super Mario Kart. Unfortunately, the clash of these two mega-games hasn't proven to be that good. Oops.

Big Red Adventure

(70) Core Design - Adventure £39.99

The follow up to *Nippon Safes*... arrgh, keep it away! Hang on a minute, though, this looks like it could actually be quite good.

Bioforce

(95 Classic) Electronic Arts - Action adventure £44.99

The first "real" interactive movie? Or is *Bioforce* just another game that looks like *Alone in the Dark*?

Descent

(94 Classic) Interplay - 3D shoot 'em up £44.99

Could this be the game to finally knock *Doom* off the top spot? The fabulous 3D game from Interplay arrives at last.

Heretic

(78) ID/Raven - 3D shoot 'em up £39.99

"Doom in tights." Can a fighting fantasy version of the greatest game of all time, ever, ever, really be better? Er, no.

Iron Assault

(57) Virgin - 3D shoot 'em up £34.99

A distinctly average "big robot" game joins the ranks of other distinctly average "big robot" games on the PC.

Legions

(65) Mindscape - Strategy war game £34.99

This is definitely one for the Hex-heads, this is. It's intense, ludicrously strategic and it runs under Windows. Eek!

Lost Eden

(76) Virgin - Adventure £34.99

Cryo's dinosaur game finally arrives a year after it was unveiled. *Jurassic Park* meets *Dragon Lore*.

Issue 26 - May 1995

Atari Action Pack

(50) Activision - VCS Atari Compilation £24.99

This compilation includes lots of really ancient Activision Atari VCS games, all for Windows and all on one cd. It's like a time machine that takes you somewhere a bit crap!

Cyclones

(78) Mindscape - Adventure £44.99

Yet another *Doom* clone - but not a bad one by any means - from the team that brought us

both *Heretic* and *Shadowcaster*.

Football Glory

(60) Kompakt - Sports £TBA

Q: When is *Sensible Soccer* not really *Sensible Soccer*?

A: When it's a not-quite-so-good copy called *Football Glory*.

Gulity

(58) Psygnosis - Adventure £39.99

Sequel-ola. *Gulity* is the follow up to the awful *Innocent Until Caught*, and it's significantly better, but still not brilliant.

Jungle Strike

(79) Gremlin - Shoot 'em up £39.99

Another sequel... this time, the sequel to *Desert Strike*. But this shoot 'em up is bigger, more varied and harder than the original.

NBA Live

(90 Classic) Electronic Arts - Sport £44.99

EA Sports awakens from a period of dormancy with this absolutely corking basketball arcade game - the best of its type around.

Renegade

(75) SSI - Space Sim £44.99

SSI's *Tie Fighter/Wing Commander* wannabe in glorious SVGA. A surprisingly playable space warfare game.

Rise of the Triad

(82 Classic) US Gold and PD Selections - Adventure £39.95

Some love it and some hate it... but of the *Doom*-alikes, this is one of the best.

Super Frog

(40) Team 17 - Platform £19.99

A platform game with a frog in it... Uh-huh. Okay.

Tank Commander

(60) Domark - Simulation £39.99

A budget-style tank game at full price. If you've got more money than sense, you'll really love it!

Woodruff and the Schnibbly of Azimuth

(75) Sierra - Adventure £39.99

A weird adventure game from Sierra. A wonderfully deceptive adventure with comic-book feel!

X-COM

(94 Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99

The first *X-COM* was absolutely brilliant. This sequel is even better still.

Issue 27 - June 1995

Blind Date

(25) Domark - Adventure £39.99

Chris had a jolly splendid time reviewing last month's "interactive-try-to-get-laid-simulator". What will the softies come up with next?

Full Throttle

(92 - Classic) LucasArts/Virgin - Adventure £49.99

Hooray for LucasArts adventures. Big, tough guy, biker stuff this time. Splendid.

Flight of the Amazon Queen

(50) Warner Interactive - Adventure £39.99

This game from Warner Interactive is desperately trying to be a LucasArts adventure but failing quite miserably. It's naff.

Hardball 4

(83 Recommended) Accolade/Warner - Arcade/Sports £39.99

Returning May's theme of "sequels", Warner Interactive brings us the fourth *Hardball*. Surely Warner have to call it quits now?

High Seas Trader

(62) Impressions - Strategy/Simulation £39.99

Affectionately referred to as "High Street Trader" in the PC Zone office, this is the latest strategy offering from Impressions.

Magic Carpet: Hidden Worlds

(80 Recommended) Bullfrog - Arcade/Strategy £19.99

A sort of add-on thingy for *Magic Carpet* with lots of snow. The trouble is though, it's completely and utterly, stupidly, bloody hard.

PyroTechnica

(69) Psygnosis - 3D Shoot 'em up £29.99

Very poor *Descent*-wannabe from Psygnosis. Fortunately though, it's considerably cheaper.

Psycho Pinball

(78) Codemasters - Arcade £44.99

Pinball from Codemasters. Some nice tables. Some nice music. Sorted.

Slipstream 5000

(88 Recommended) Gremlin Int. - Arcade/Shoot 'em up £39.99

Three-dimensional-fabby-whizzo racing/shooting/ speedy thing from Gremlin. Splendid stuff, and better than boring, run-of-the-mill racing games.

Star Trek: TNG - "A Final Unity"

(94 Classic) MicroProse - Adventure £49.99

Yes, it may have a ridiculously long title, but this is, without a doubt, the best game to bear the *Star Trek* name so far.

Super Streetfighter II Turbo

(90 Classic) Gametek - Beat 'em up £39.99

It would seem that last month's theme was "games with very long names". Gametek's *SSF/II Turbo II* is one of the best arcade conversions ever seen on the PC.

Ticonderoga

(78) Mindscape - Naval/strategy £44.99

Silly name but a damn fine naval strategy game. Lovely graphics and splendid cd bits.

Virtua Chess

(85 Classic) Titus - Strategy £44.99

Snazzy 3D SVGA chess thingy from Titus, France. This one's different looking and with a ninja bastard brainbox.

Warriors

(85 Classic) Mindscape - Beat 'em up £39.99

What, yet another beat 'em up? Anyone would think there's a shortage of 'em or something.

Issue 28 - July 1995

1830

(68) US Gold - Board Game £39.99

Set in the early years of American colonisation, a sort of *Railroad Tycoon* meets *Risk*. Strictly for those of trainspotter persuasion.

Alex Dampier Pro Hockey

(66) Merit Software - Sports Sim £39.95

Ice hockey sim with *FIFA*-style viewpoint, but impossible control system, and comes no where near *NHL Hockey '95*.

Allen Breed: Tower Assault

(81) Team 17 - Shoot 'em up £29.99

The sequel to *Allen Breed*, but superior to the PC version of the original. Great graphics and frenzied, addictive shooty action.

Brett Hull Hockey '95

(73) Accolade/Warner - Sports Sim £39.99

Top-down ice hockey games, which doesn't match the king of ice hockey sims, *NHL Hockey '95*, but betters *Alex Dampier Pro Hockey '95*.

Chaos Control

(40) Philips/Infogrames - Shoot 'em up £39.99

Unbelievably terrible futuristic FMV shoot 'em up that was passable on CD-i, but should never have seen the light of day on PC.

Command & Conquer

(95 - Classic) Virgin - Strategy adventure £44.99

Dune 2 meets *Cannon Fodder* in this brilliant game of soldiers Excellent cut-scenes and a superb multi-player option.

Daedalus Encounter

(58) Virgin - Adventure £44.95

Interactive movie game that fails to make the grade - and, for what it's worth, stars Tia Carrere, the babe from *Wayne's World*.

Dominus

(42) US Gold - Strategy Game £39.99

Fantasy battle game with good graphics and comprehensive interface but lacking that vital ingredient - gameplay.

Frontier: First Encounters

(78) Gametek - Space Strategy Sim £39.99

Disappointing enhanced version of *Elite II*, which not only doesn't add much to *Frontier*, but is also bugged to jiggery.

Jagged Alliance

(72) Mindscape - Strategy Game £39.99

Risk meets *Syndicate* in this strategy battle jaunt. Not groundbreaking or particularly original but quite good fun all the same.

Loadstar

(35) BMG Interactive - Shoot 'em up £34.99

Dreadful FMV shoot 'em up not worth the paper its manual was printed on. A wax banana has more gaming possibilities.

Machlavielli The Prince

(89) MicroProse - Strategy Game £44.99

Colonization-style sim packed with political intrigue, assassinations, plagues, pirates and a unique play by e-mail feature.

Man Utd: The Double

(71) Krisalis - Sports Sim £29.99

The best *Manchester United* game yet, but it's still not a patch on the excellent *Sensible Soccer* of this world.

Sim Tower

(70) Maxis - Strategy Game £39.99

Sim City viewed from the side with the emphasis on tower blocks, but not as addictive or humorous - and the presentation is dire.

Virtual Pool

(91 - Classic) Interplay - Sports Sim £44.99

Superb gameplay and 3D graphics - complete with a multi-player network option - about as close to a game of pool in the pub as you can get.

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Civil War

(83 - Recommended) Empire - Strategy Game £44.99

The sequel to *Fields of Glory*, and jolly nice it looks too.

FX Fighters

(93 - Classic) Philips/GTE - Beam 'em up £39.99

The closest thing to *Virtua Fighter* on the PC, and by far the best beat 'em up you can buy at the moment.

Hi-Octane

(83 - Recommended) Bullfrog/EA - Racing game £39.99

Bullfrog surprises everyone by releasing a racing game, and surprises everyone even more by not saying anything about it until it's nearly finished. Hmm.

Micro Machines 2

(92 - Classic) Codemasters - Racing game £44.99

A brilliant, simple and effective racing game with a rather nifty little track designer thrown in for good measure.

Orion Conspiracy

(36) Domark - Adventure game £39.99

Domark unveils what has to be the worst-scripted computer game ever conceived (with the possible exception of *Silverload*).

Perfect General 2

(82 - Recommended) Mirage Software - Strategy War Game £44.99

Hex-tastic strategy game for those of you who really like your war games intense.

Picture Perfect Golf

(30) Empire - Sports sim £44.99

Pretty bloody naff. But hey, if you want to look at nice, digitised pictures of a golf course, this is well worth the dosh.

Prisoner of Ice

(88 - Recommended) Infogrames - Adventure game £44.99

The second game in Infogrames' Cthulhu range, and what a stonker of a point-and-click adventure it is too.

Scottish Open Golf

(60) Core Design - Sports sim £39.99

Core Design finally releases its 3D virtual golf thing. There are some okay bits and some pretty nob bits. Unfortunately it's the nob bits that win through.

Silverload

(7) Millennium/Psygnosis - Adventure game £39.99

Millennium and Psygnosis team up together and produce an adventure which is truly... quite awful.

Striker 95

(62) Time Warner - Sports sim £34.99

A football game that looks really fab and groovy, but doesn't quite cut it in the gameplay stakes.

Ultimate Doom

(90 - Classic) GT Interactive - Shoot 'em up £29.99

The original *Doom* re-packaged with an extra episode. Is it another classic or just a colossal rip-off?

Vortex

(80 - Recommended) Warner Interactive - Interactive movie £39.99

It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. Arrrrghhh!!!



Let us know what you think of the mag, talk about the toilet habits of cacodemons, or tell us what you think of Shane Ritchie. Vent your views and rant about, er, ranty stuff...

Lavatorial Loadstar

I'm confused! I've just read Charlie Brooker's review of *Loadstar* in the July edition, where he draws a comparison between playing the game and going to the toilet. I read *PC Zone* when I'm on the toilet, where I find the experience greatly enhanced when accompanied by a really satisfying dump! So does this mean that I should go out and buy the game even though I thought *Rebel Assault* was honk?

Would you also consider making *PC Zone* out of softer paper... and on a few more sheets please?

Mark Dolan, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey

Don't do it... don't buy it. Neither the box nor the manual are absorbent enough, and there are three CDs in there, so you could end up with a nasty dose of chaffing.

New And Improved

A bigger letters page! Hoo-bloody-rah. About time... It's always been one of my favourite bits, so it's nice to have more to read now. By the way John, the beard was a good move... all you need now it to get yourself a decent haircut.

Pete

(Taken from CompuServe)

More Toilet Humour (Guffaw!)

Our requests for toilets in *Doom* a few months back appears to have piqued the interest of many of the sad

individuals amongst you, and it would seem that we are now to suffer a plague of WADs and screen shots containing "amusing" lavatorial incidences...

I can confirm that there are indeed bogs in *Doom*. (No... really?) As the screen shot enclosed shows (see pic below), I have managed to catch an imp in the process of having a dump – and as you can see, he doesn't seem too impressed. Also enclosed is a screen shot of the auto-map showing the location of the toilets. (Um, yes, the automap... Well, it was a tad too fuzzy to print, so we haven't – sorry.)

I've heard that there are a few Gamtek-esque bugged versions of *Doom* around and not everyone's copy will have this particular water closet in this location. If this is the case you should try running *Doom* with the line DOOM – PORCELAIN. If this doesn't work, you're knackered really.

By the way, I've heard that if you type IDWC on the automap of "Doom 3: Holiday in Bridlington" all of the toilets are highlighted.

Simon Hudson, Huddersfield

Really? Thanks awfully.

In issue 28 you asked for pictures of toilets in *Doom*... Well I've found them and I've sent you a screen shot. I found the loos in E1M2. Do I get a prize for being first?

Meredith Davey, London

No.

The toilets in *Doom* are not a myth! They can be found on the last level of this classic game. The enclosed pic proves our story and of course means that we

Write to PC Zone

There are numerous ways to transmit your delightful scrawlings to *PC Zone*. You can either use the traditional method, oft-described as "snail-mail" by the pretentious technocrats of this world...

WordProcessor

PC Zone

Dennis Publishing

19 Bolsover Street

London

W1P 7HJ

Or you can be really hip, trendy and cyber and do a whacky e-mail thing...

CompuServe: PC ZONE 100142, 2152

CIX: PC Zone @ CIX.compulink.co.uk

are able to claim our special prize.

Ewan Loughlin and Mark McDonald, East Kilbride, Glasgow

The following letter was written to us on toilet roll! Ho-ho.

Whilst wandering the corridors of *Doom* recently I happened upon this: a toilet near one of the cess-pools. Am I one of the first people to have found one of these things?

A Gower, East Lothian

No you're not. Anyway, what happened to the pictures of the Andrex puppy running away with the bog roll that I asked for last month? Right then... off you go.

Poetry Corner

Roses are red

And Violets are a hit

PC Zone is great

And the French smell like...

Nicholas David, Rixensart, Belgium

The French smell like Nicholas David?

(Below) By M Davey
He's heading for a very sore bottom indeed.

(Right) By S Hudson
This shot has to win hands down – not just a bog, but an imp in mid dump too! Cool!

(Far right) By A Gower
But where's the bloody Andrex puppy, eh? eh!?



Techy Bit

In response to a number of letters we've had since last month we will now be having a bit of space on the letters page where we shall be answering technical queries.

It seems that many people see writing this kind of letter as a chance to gloat about what kind of PC they actually have. On this note, we have decided to omit those parts of a letter because they're very, very boring.

I own an Olivetti PCS 44/C with 4Mb. (Pack that in right this minute.) I want to upgrade my machine to 8Mb but I'm getting contradictory reports about how to do this. Some shops tell me that I can use any upgrade, whereas some say I need a specific Olivetti upgrade (which is about £60 more expensive). Olivetti technical support, on the other hand, think I should

buy something directly from them. What should I do?

M J Chainey, Liverpool

Right then. There's a good chance that you will actually need to go for the Olivetti branded memory because the machine you have has a non-standard setup. I'm not certain, though, as the guy I rang at Olivetti was suitably ambiguous about the whole thing, but I'm assuming that the "C" at the end of your processor name stands for "SLC", which means that it's an unusual kind of CPU. This was part of a trend that a number of manufacturers went through a few years ago, Olivetti and IBM included, whereby CPU's that required less power were used on the motherboards. Due to the fact that the addressing of these CPU's was different, they could only use specific types of memory, and, ironically, this

memory is far more expensive. Thankfully however, these days we only see SLC processors in laptops, but that doesn't really help you, does it? Sorry. It looks like you're going to be £60 worse off.

Sometime this year I am hoping to upgrade my system but I am unsure whether to go for a 486 DX100 or a Pentium chip. Please tell me which one to go for as I don't want to have to spend even more money in a few years time.

Tim Jones, Hants

I presume you're thinking of going for one of the Overdrive chips that you can buy at the moment, in which case it has to be said that in a year or two, both of them will be obsolete. The Pentium Overdrive isn't exactly the greatest invention on the planet (we gave it a bit of a panning when we reviewed

it a few months ago), but it does give you some of the advantages of Pentium-based 64-bit processing.

If it's sheer clock speed that you want, then go for the DX4. It will speed up your machine just as much as adding the Pentium Overdrive, and it's a bit cheaper too.

Unfortunately, from what we can make out, the whole market seems to be heading towards a minimum spec for a PC of a P75 with 8Mb of RAM. Intel will no longer be making DX chips, and the software houses are optimising all future projects for Pentium. Nightmare! If you really want to buy something that's at least partially future proof, I suggest you save up and buy a PCI motherboard (either a Plato or Triton) with a P75 or P90 pre-installed. It'll cost more, but at least it's upgradable.

Huh? Bloody hell, Belgians, eh? I reckon we've been taking the piss out of the wrong people all the time, you know.

Weirdy Corner

I would like to start this letter by remarking on the worrying increase in chins these days. Ewan's neighbour, who is hugely fat, has around 40 chins and we feel that these could be put to

better use as a replacement for those who happen to have no chin at all, for example, those effected by terrible chin removing disasters. They could also be used to feed Britain's underprivileged, who are seriously in need of a good feed. Regular, or indeed irregular, viewers of ITV's *Murder She Wrote* will be well aware that Jessica Fletcher has an infinite number of nieces and nephews.

The actors also use the word "fanny" to refer to a bottom. Also, all of the murderers say, "very clever Mrs Fletcher, but not clever enough," and are then promptly caught by efficient American Police officers.

Mark McDonald, Glasgow

What have I done to deserve getting letters like this one? What's going on? Why are people simply sending completely irrelevant crap to me?

Sticky CDs

I really felt that I had to write to you on the subject of your damn CD covers. Here's the deal. The latest issue of PC Zone arrives on my door-mat. Hurriedly you rush upstairs, turn the computer on, tear the CD off the front of the mag and... you're buggered. Will the bloody CD come out? You've got to be kidding. You pull and tug and pull and tug, and it just seems to get more and more stuck. You hit it, throw it, stamp on it, let the dog chew it and eventually you have to resort to scissors to get the bastard thing out. Isn't there something you can do?

Daniel Scarfe, Norwich

There are a number of things we could do, and they're all things that we're keen to hear »



« peoples' views on. Firstly, we could go for a "proper" CD case, but these are a bit more expensive and there is a good chance that we'd have to put the price of the mag up. Secondly, we could go to printed paper envelope things, which look very nice (they're a bit like the things that CD singles used to come in back in the good ol' days). Finally, we could just carry on with what we're doing at the moment and ignore the odd few people that write in to whinge about the things.

Technical Support

I wrote to Sierra recently after *Kings Quest VII* kept crashing my system. I gave them a disk with the problem clearly defined, the error code listed, a copy of Norton sysinfo and MSD on my system. What I got back was a generic letter saying that perhaps I should look at my memory configuration! I have loads of memory on my machine with 634K free under QUEMM! I don't have any trouble with anything else – even the Sierra demo that you published a while ago worked with no trouble at all.

D Gaspare, Brackley, Northants

It's surprising these days that a technical support line at a software house seems so unhelpful. In recent months we've had some excellent reports of the techy bods searching for ways to solve individual problems. The only thing we can think of (I don't know if you were trying to get our advice or not) is that *Kings Quest* might be conflicting with your QUEMM setup. The memory manager stuffs system files all over the place in the memory map, and there's a good chance that KQVII is looking for something in a memory location that has been altered.

Multimedia Problems

What does multimedia mean? How do I get some? And how do I know if I've got it already?

T Tucker, Chelmsford

Without being tossy or boring, the basic definition of multimedia is "CD". A CD allows a multitude of different media (sound, video, etc.) to be moved around together.

Multimedia on the PC is broken down into two categories: MPC-1 and MPC-2. MPC-1 is basically just any old PC with a CD-ROM drive and sound card, for example, a 386 with 4Mb and a SoundBlaster. MPC-2, on the other hand, is an 8Mb 486DX2 or higher with a double-speed CD-ROM drive and a stereo sound card. Comprehend?

Shane Ritchie Appreciation Society

In response to your hate-mail request a few months ago I would like it known that Shane Ritchie should be the single

object of ridicule for the rest of eternity. Why would anyone want to see him on their doorstep with a box of bloody washing powder?

G Carrigan, Belfast

Stop taking the piss out of the French NOW! And start ripping into Shane Ritchie instead.

Dave Coombs, Wales

What exactly does Shane Ritchie have to do with computer games? I read, with a certain amount of disgust, your inane and puerile "hate-mail" request in issue 28, and I feel that you are simply ignoring what your readers want... namely, information about PC and CD-ROM games. Surely Mr Brooker has better things to do with his time than simply victimise people in such a childish manner all of the time?

H Harris, Nothants

Well, er... as far as we can tell he hasn't actually. For the past year Charlie has devoted his life to the abuse of French people, but now the guy has finally made his peace. Unfortunately he seems to have found himself a new target.

Culky Is God

Who is Colin Culk? Is he a real person or is he just someone that you've made up... like Mr Cursor? Also, why isn't Mr Cursor in the videos on your CD?

C Clare, Cambs

The reason that Mr Cursor isn't in the videos is because he's the chap behind the camera. It seems that whilst he's scared to death of anything to do with computers, he doesn't have a problem with Camcorders. He's a bit nifty with it too, don't you think?

On the subject of who Colin actually is, well he actually started out as something that appeared a long, long time ago in a magazine called *Game Zone* (a predecessor to *PC Zone*) and he recently reappeared from wherever it is that he's been hiding in the interim. And to prove that he's not just a figment of our imagination, we've printed a piccy of him. **Z**



(Right) Culky in one of his infamous David Belamy disguises – he's a talented chappy make no mistake.

John's bit on the side...



Art Editors, eh? Funny guys, huh? You write a perfectly decent bit of editorial



and then the cheeky bastards go and dig out a distinctly dodgy picture of you from a Christmas party. If any of you were wondering who the odd geezer in the headband was last month... well, er, that was me. Dearest Jason (said Art Ed.) appears to have an inexhaustible supply of compromising and embarrassing pics of me. Anyway, if you can contain your sniggering for a mo it's that time of the month again. No, not *that* time – it's the bit where I get to babble on about stuff that seems like it could be important.

Things are a-changin'

Yep, that's right. No sooner have we finally come to accept that no matter what machine we've got, it's still not powerful enough to play the latest game, but we now find that even more things are on the move. I'm referring, of course, to this new-fangled *Windows 95* thing.

Surprisingly, the games press has tended to shy away from it lately, but from a recent meeting we had with Microsoft (it's true, the mighty *PC Zone* finally descended into Hades and confronted the Dark Lord Himself) it has to be said that *Windows 95* is going to make a MASSIVE impact on the PC games market. Whereas in the past developers have had to really fight with an awkward operating system and various ridiculous quirks that the PC throws up, *Windows 95* now lets them unleash the true power of the PC. By means of some fancy 32-bit accessing and a rather groovy thing called WinG, the future of PC gaming looks stunning. Under the new system, games run faster, smoother and on the whole, er, better.

We've only seen a few demos so far, but they're looking unbelievable. There's a 3D game being demonstrated, which is pretty impressive under DOS, but under *Windows* the texture mapping on the backgrounds is just so much better. Who would've believed it, eh? With the new system we finally get smooth parallax scrolling and fast, arcade-quality polygon graphics – even on a DX/33. And about bloody time too!

The big change as far as systems goes, though, is that we're all going to need more memory if we want to get the most out of our PCs. If you've been kidding yourself that your 486DX with 4Mb is going to be enough, think again. From now on the best stuff is going to need 8Mb (at least), so that's about another £60 you're going to have to invest in your PC. Bummer, eh? It's like having a kid that always needs better trainers.

Another Day at the Office





MY MONITOR OCCASIONALLY HAS difficulties dealing with the colour red, and will happily "drop" it with no advanced warning whatsoever. (It's like a sort of impromptu CGA graphics simulator.) Whenever this happens I'm forced to pause whatever game I'm playing and spend the next 30 minutes cajoling things back to normality, with taps, slaps and thumps to various parts of the casing. Bloody annoying, basically. It's been an ongoing problem for about a year now, but a mixture of skintness, laziness and fear of computer hardware shops has stopped me doing anything about it. Until, that is, a hot Saturday last month. Here's the story.

A pal who lives near Gatwick airport phones me and tells me he's just bought a spanky new monitor, so would I like his old one on easy payment terms (like sometime before 1998, if I can be bothered, and not to worry if I can't)? "Yes!" I say, immediately. Who wouldn't with terms like those? It's late afternoon. I tell him I shall drive straight down (it's a 25-mile trip from London); so I don shoes, haul ass out of my horrid 12th floor council flat, and head for the lifts. When I reach the "elevator-room" I find that the mad bloke who always talks about his lottery ticket numbers is waiting for the lift as well. Nightmare. "After you," I say, politely. As the lift makes its descent, Mr Lottery, predictably, starts to tell me his lottery numbers for the day and why he chose them: "I've ignored the very low numbers because there were three last week," he says, knowledgeably. "I've gone for 14, 16 and 19 because I reckon it's going to be tightly grouped around that area, and then I've gone for 32 and 33 as there's definitely going to be a couple of low 30's. I've got 48, too, which is a cert. I had a dream about it." Just as he starts

on his bonus number, we hit terra firma, the doors slide open, and I dash

He's afraid of... Clutch Cables

for the safety of my shite car.

Slam! Radio on! Keys in slot! It starts on the fifth attempt.

Bottleneck In Purley

Brixton wasn't too bad, and neither was Streatham, but the Purley Way is choc-a-blok with Saturday Volvo drivers, en-route to *Ikea* and *Do-It-All*. "But I'm in a Volvo too," I suddenly remember. Panic stations. But then I console myself with the fact that all the Volvos surrounding mine are shiny M-reg models and don't have their air filters held down against the inside of the bonnet with a rolled up towel. And they don't backfire every 90 seconds. Nor do they have well-dodgy clutch cable couplings no chance of passing their next MOT - Joy! (Sort of.)

Waypoint one reached

Ahoy Merstham! Ahoy Kevin's house! Ahoy new(ish) monitor! Unfortunately I can't just grab it and run. I'm forced to sit through a video first. Normally this wouldn't be so bad, but the problem is that Kevin's idea of a good movie is anything by Peter Greenaway. "Look at that," he says, during a 4000-year-long, slow-mo tracking shot, "It's just like a Renaissance painting." And indeed it is: Mr Greenaway certainly has an eye for colour. But the beauty of a real painting is that you can say, "Yeah, that's nice," and piss off. However, this "painting" still has a good few hours to run, and it's getting more boring by the second. I contemplate suicide.

Having listened to Kev's speech about how the Peter Greenaway film "broke down the barriers between the audience and the players," I am now back in my car and the monitor's on the back seat. It's 11.30pm, and I'm heading back to London. The car is backfiring like crazy, but I know it'll get better soon (it comes and goes, comes and goes). But

as I hit Streatham High Street there's a totally unexpected loud thud from beneath my feet, and the clutch pedal suddenly goes all limp. The cable has snapped. My first thought is that I'm not in the RAC. So what next? Phone friends for help? I try, but nobody's in. Get taxi back? Can't afford it. Get bus back? Not lugging a bulky

monitor! Leave monitor overnight in car? No. Continue journey in clutchless car? Er... okay, sounds like an adventure.

Live and learn

Here are the rules of driving a manual-shift motor vehicle without a clutch.

1 Stop engine. **2** Engage first. **3** Start car. **4** Jerk into motion, pull out, and avoid traffic approaching from behind. **5** Saunter along at six mph. **6** Learn to completely ignore traffic lights. **7** If you reach stationary traffic, pull stick to neutral, brake as late as possible,* turn off engine, wait for traffic in front to move again, and repeat steps **2**, **3** and **4**. **8** Remember that every time you stop and start - especially at night when your lights are on - you're using battery juice. (**8** cont.) So turn off all lights, including the hazard warning ones. **9** Go up on the pavement if necessary... anything rather than actually stop. **10** Weep silently as your battery warning light starts to flicker. **11** Curse openly when the battery finally goes dead in a really dodgy part of Brixton. **12** Get out and push dead car 900 yards into scary street containing monsters on crack. **13** Try to look as if you're armed. **14** Walk to main road and hope taxi appears. **15** When one does, tell the driver you've got to go get a monitor from your broken down car, and will five quid cover the fare? **16** He eyes you with suspicion and zooms away without you, thinking you've just nicked something out of someone else's car and are using him as a getaway driver. **17** And so on.

Eventually

At 2.45 in the morning I reach home - and I'm so hyped up now I can't go to sleep, so I decide to "relax" with a game or two of *Links 386*. I crack open a tinnie, attach my new monitor, fire up the PC, and stare with disbelief at the screen. No fucking red. I'm forced to bang away at the casing for 30 minutes. The red comes back, but now I've lost blue. It's worse than my old monitor. And I suddenly understand why Kevin bought a new one. Bastard! Bastard! Bastard!

And the moral of the story?

What you've just read is a 100 per cent true story. And if there's a moral in it, then I reckon it's this: if your monitor goes funny, don't get a replacement from Kevin. And even more importantly, don't borrow my car to go and get it! **Z**

(Below) Zone's high-tech simulation of a choc-a-blok jam round the Purley Way - No expense spared here!



* The reason for braking as late as possible is that the traffic in front might start moving at any time... so if your luck is in you may not need to stop at all.

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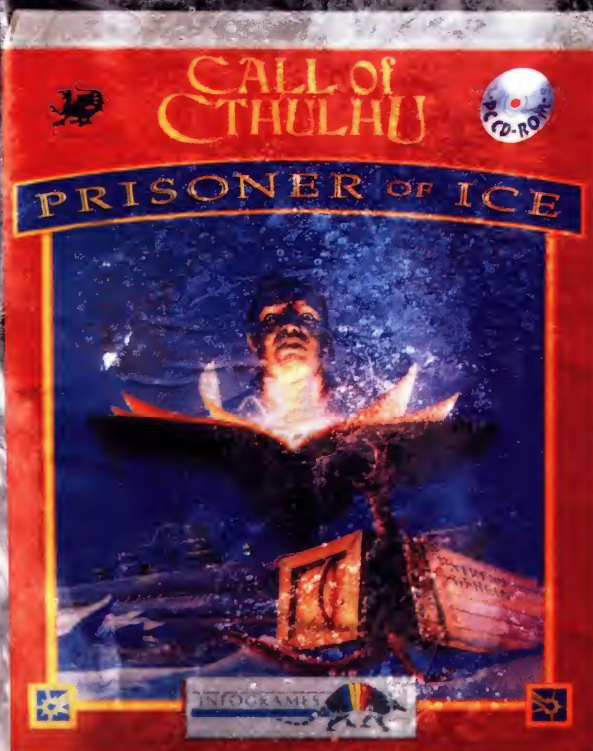
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